THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Becoming Ethical Subjects

An *êthography* of Do-it-Yourself music practices in Glasgow

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Declaration

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed:_____

Evangelos Chrysagis

Abstract

This thesis focuses upon 'Do-it-Yourself' (DiY) music practices in Glasgow, a Scottish city with an established reputation for sustaining a prolific grassroots music scene. With special reference to three local music actors – a band, a music collective and a live music promoter – it explores ethnographically the pluralistic nature of music-making and its relation to ethics. Rather than perceiving activities under the DiY rubric as peripheral and haphazard, I argue that they play an intrinsic role in ethical self-formation and that they are striking in their capacity to order the lives of urban individuals. Therefore, I attend to music practice as an ethical practice by underscoring the interrelationship between music and the city as a distinctive form of ethical urban life.

In drawing upon the emergent anthropology of ethics and echoing the work of authors such as Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre, I conceive of music-making as a process of intersubjective ethical cultivation, as a way of exercising freedom, and the means by which my informants perpetually sought to exert their right to inhabit the locality. In treating the local as a series of repetitive but ever evolving and intersecting pathways as opposed to a given and fixed geographical entity, I attempt to render the city an inherent ethical modality of social life and, conversely, to scrutinize music practice as a process that localizes subjects.

Thus, my ethnographic examination of the ways in which urban space impinges upon music practice and, in turn, is musically constructed and experienced, offers a lens into the ethical resonance of music as a processual nexus for the making of ethical selves and cities. My informants' desire to inhabit the locality on their own terms was predicated upon the active appropriation and enactment of spaces and norms, rather than oscillating between passivity or subordination and resistance. This highlights the needs to problematize the pervasive notion of 'agency' that underpins social-scientific

accounts of human freedom and to question the rigidity of the dichotomy between structure and agency.

An emphasis on ethical judgement and the pedagogical role of music activity in conferring a DiY êthos and in making oneself a certain kind of person also requires the consideration of the embodied dispositions pertinent to and cultivated through variegated music practices, and how the acquisition of relevant musical skills simultaneously engenders particular ethical potentialities. This construes ethics as Aristotelian poiêsis and an ineluctably skilled practice and further alludes to the intimate relationship between music and the body.

In resorting to the body's capacity to affect and be affected by music and other bodies, my analysis aims to account for the conditioning of sensuous articulations and corporeal registers by sonic vocabularies, and the process of interpenetration between the musical and the visceral that elicits specific ethical propensities. This interface between sound and the affective body, I argue, provides a uniquely 'musical' way of thinking about ethics as a relational phenomenon, and also helps to restore a notion of politics on the basis of intersubjective ethical transformation rather than conventional political efficacy in the public realm.

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Or shall we argue that music conduces to excellence, on the ground that it can form our minds and habituate us to true pleasures as our bodies are made by gymnastic to be of a certain character?

[ἢ μᾶλλον οἰητέον πρὸς ἀρετήν τι τείνειν τὴν μουσικήν, ὡς δυναμένην, καθάπερ ἡ γυμναστικὴ τὸ σῶμα ποιόν τι παρασκευάζει, καὶ τὴν μουσικὴν τὸ ἦθος ποιόν τι ποιεῖν, ἐθίζουσαν δύνασθαι χαίρειν ὀρθῶς]

Aristotle, *Politics* (1984: 169)

Nothing essential happens in the absence of noise.

Jaques Attali, *Noise* (1985: 3)

Introduction

I cannot recall the first time I visited Glasgow. It must have been sometime in late 2005 when I arrived in Scotland to take up a postgraduate degree in anthropology. What I do remember very clearly is that I knew Glasgow beforehand: I knew it from its *music*. The advent of what has been glossed as 'post-rock', a largely instrumental guitar-based music genre, had accompanied my undergraduate years and several bands at the forefront of the genre were Glasgow-based. I remember sitting back and listening to the music of these bands, with lyrics that were scarce but back then I could not fully grasp their meaning anyway and, in a somewhat essentialist and romanticizing spirit, thinking that such slow-paced, melancholic but simultaneously angry music – sometimes called the 'quiet/loud dynamic' – could only come from a 'rainy', 'gloomy' place, somewhere 'up North'. I remember wondering, *why* Glasgow? Why, of all the places 'up North', was it Glasgow's music that had struck a chord with me? I still wonder why today.

This thesis, therefore, is partially the outcome of a personal musical journey and about my musical relationship with the city. Though I was unaware at the time that just two years later I would leave Greece for Scotland and archaeology for anthropology, I can now see that my memories and choices followed a particular logic (at least of sorts). Over the past eight years my musical 'distance-learning' has been intensified by constant concert ('gig') attendance in Glasgow. And then, of course, there is my fieldwork.

As my gig attendance and music-listening, which included several non-local bands and musicians, diversified considerably and as my familiarity with Glasgow deepened, more questions emerged. Why would touring bands visit Glasgow and not nearby? Why, out of the whole of the UK, would certain bands play in, say, London and Glasgow only? How does a provincial (by which I mean not a capital) British city sustain such a wealth of musical activity? Why do affluent local bands continue to reside in Glasgow rather than relocate to the musical 'mecca' of London? Although the anthropology

department at Edinburgh graciously approved my research proposal in 2008, I was fully aware that music, especially British music, was not a central ethnographic concern within the discipline. Since the general lack of anthropological interest in the subject made it unlikely that anyone would answer these questions for me, I have decided to do this for myself.

I might be accused of a certain egocentrism. However, I did not embark on this long and laborious process out of some personal whim. Rather, my main motivation was to answer anthropologically significant questions and attempt to address the identified gap in the ethnographic literature. To the best of my knowledge, there is *no* ethnographic study of popular music that focuses exclusively on Glasgow or Scotland more widely. When I arrived in Glasgow determined to enlist one or two local bands in my project, the first problem I stumbled upon was not how to find bands. I had already established various connections with musicians and other relevant actors before formally entering the field, but it soon became obvious that I had to make a swift decision regarding the musical form I wanted study, which potential research participants would represent. Due to the pluralism and complexity of music practices in the city this was not an easy task.

Nevertheless, a random event led to the shift of my focus from music genres to modes of conduct, and from categories and classifications to practices and processes. A PhD student at Glasgow University provided me with a copy of a feature that had recently appeared in the national music magazine *New Musical Express* (NME). The one-page feature contained information about Glasgow's 'nae wave' scene and included excerpts from an interview with a band called *Divorce*. Along with other bands such as *Ultimate Thrush*, *Big Ned* and *Golden Grrrls*, *Divorce* 'were flying the nae wave flag north of the border for fans of face-melting onslaughts of savage noisescapes [*sic*]' (Dosanjh 2009: 21). The NME journalist had attempted to draw a link between the musical traits and aesthetic conventions of nae wave with those of late 1970s New York's no wave, which

had spurred an array of influential bands, such as *Suicide* and the recently split-up *Sonic Youth*.[1]

Despite the feature's attempt to label and pigeonhole the nae wave 'sound', the avant-garde sensibilities of no wave, which as a music/art crossover was informed less by a specific sound and more by an 'approach', were indeed present in 'nae wave'. 'I have no idea what nae wave is', says Ruth, the vocalist from *Divorce*, 'but it could be a genre', she adds. Lucy, the guitarist, who, along with Anna, the second guitarist, Alistair, the drummer, and Sophie, the bassist, complete the band's line-up, states that: 'I think we all want to play loud and erratically. Have fun and make ears bleed' (cited in Dosanjh 2009: 21). NME described nae wave as a 'community' comprising 'not so much like-sounding but like-minded individuals who've stuck two proverbials up at the twee niceness of their musical surroundings' (ibid.).[2] As Alistair put it: 'There are so many bands here that just seem to want to play *nice* music' and 'we wanna do something completely different'; but 'I think the aesthetic behind it is just more sorta people with a similar attitude than a signature sound' and, therefore, 'a band from London can be nae wave even though they're not fannies like people from Scotland', concludes Scotland-born and bred Alistair with self-deprecating humour (cited in ibid.).

In light of this, additional questions began to emerge. What was 'nae wave'? Was it about music, 'fun', or an 'attitude'? What did 'like-minded' mean in this context? Did it signal a particular 'ideology', an 'aesthetic' as Alistair put it, or something else? And why did Ruth have 'no idea' what nae wave was? Moreover, why did NME and the band themselves described the *Divorce* sound by conjuring up images of bodily disintegration rather than emotion or cognition? How could I make sense of the 'aggressive' but largely ironic nature of their statements? Finally, how had a shared

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[1] For an overview of no wave see Masters (2007), Moore & Coley (2008) and Reynolds (2005: 50-72). In reality, nae wave was a linguistic joke based on a local idiom. In *The Complete Patter* Munro explains that '-nae or -ny' literally means '*not*' and it 'is a negative suffix common enough in Scots, as in *cannae*, *willny*, etc. It is used on its own by local children to contradict the last thing said to them' (2006: 113).

[2] 'Twee' refers to indie-pop, a sentimental and melodic guitar based music genre (Chapter 1).

‘attitude’ engendered a musical ‘community’, and how and why did they set themselves apart musically, but also *dispositionally,* from their ‘surroundings’?

A few days later I was discussing my fieldwork predicament with one of my Edinburgh friends, namely how to locate appropriate bands and other relevant musicians to take part in my research. It turned out that he was acquainted with the *Divorce* drummer through their mutual involvement in the Edinburgh club scene. Soon, I would have my first meeting with Alistair, who was living in Edinburgh (before relocating to Glasgow halfway through my fieldwork). Alistair subsequently offered to introduce me to other ‘like-minded’ actors, such as the promoter *Cry Parrot* and the music collective *Winning Sperm Party*. The latter of whom had also been mentioned in the NME feature as ‘releasing all that is glorious and new in Scotland’ (Dosanjh 2009: 21). All three actors feature extensively in what follows and form the ethnographic focus of this thesis.

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During my fieldwork I encountered an impressive array of music practices within a close-knit network of individuals that was infused with creativity, aspiration and determination. Within a period of eighteen months I witnessed various bands forming, evolving and breaking up. I learned that multiple band membership and overlapping personnel were the norm. Several of my informants were employed in the local music and art industries in various posts and for variable intervals and the crossover between music and art pervaded a good deal of the practices I observed. Music events took place in a variety of appropriated urban spaces. In tracing my informants’ musical trajectories I attended gigs in flats, pub basements, art galleries and recording studios, among others, both inside and outside of Glasgow. A host of individuals participated in the realization of these events and sustained music-making *tout court*, contributing as performers, audiences or intermediaries, or as an amalgamation of all three. As such, music emerged as an intrinsically social practice and process (Cohen 1991; Finnegan 1989).

Particularly striking about this network of individuals was the actuality that their practices were present, but 'hidden' (Finnegan 1989). After three years of constant gig attendance and a long-standing personal interest in the city's musical output, I was oblivious to the prolific activities of my would-be informants and the extended and interwoven networks underpinning them. Much of this musical activity was public, even gigs in private flats. Nevertheless, one had either to seek out these events that did not feature prominently in local press or online music websites, or to take part in the word-of-mouth and digital social media publicity that served to attract crowds.

That these practices were a 'public secret' (Taussig 1999) was exemplified by the fact that my informants *themselves* were unaware of many of the other activities, happenings and events occurring in parallel with theirs, which mutually reinforced and characterized the pluralism of urban music. This was unsurprising for a city that had an established reputation for grassroots cultural production that formed the bedrock of its music and art scenes (Lowndes 2010), and which had a long local history of 'making do' (de Certeau 1984) and a culture of survival (Damer 1990). This cultural activity was fraught with competition and pride, but also with mutual support, humour, love, care and encouragement.

The urban fabric of Glasgow provided the background as well as the generative context of these events. Thus, the city affected in explicit, practical ways this flurry of activity by either facilitating or hindering specific practices due to the lack of appropriate spaces for exhibitions and performances. More generally, the unequal distribution of local resources had historically engendered widespread and violent forms of social inequality. This had fostered a reality of exclusion for large segments of the population, but had equally spurred a wealth of self-sustained activities from individuals whose ambitions sought to transcend financial and social constraints. A sense of this common urban history also shaped music practice in tacit and implicit ways, giving rise to a local *êthos*.

In turn, this endowed and constituted the parameters of music-making as a distinctively urban practice. The city had become part and parcel of particular forms of music practice, not so much as a geographic entity or as the stuff of local fantasy and imagination, but as an integral dimension of both everyday musical conduct and social life in general. Urban symbolisms and local mythology for past successes of bands were enacted in everyday practice rather than musical products *per se*. This calls for a reconsideration of 'the local' as a *generative* modality of social life and not as its contextual ground, and begs the question of how local practices produce local subjects (Appadurai 1995). In its simpler form, therefore, the central argument of this thesis dwells in the reciprocal process of people making music and music making people.

In attending to musical processes as processes of localization, I aim to address the intrinsic role of the city in music practice, but also to account for the role of music in affording particular forms of identification and belonging within an increasingly alienating urban environment. For many of my informants who had arrived in Glasgow from elsewhere in Scotland, England, as well as abroad, music represented a meaningful path and the means to transform, create and ultimately integrate within the locality. According to Bennett the term 'local' is applied in two ways in the study of popular music (2000: 52). Sometimes the term 'locality' is used to denote a musically homogeneous national context, while others employ the term in order to analyze more limited areas of music practice, such as urban and rural settings. For Bennett, both applications are problematic, because they presuppose a 'fixed' spatial and cultural territory, and such territories do not exist. Thus, any locality is a contested place.

In conceptualizing the variegated forms of music activity as one set out of a series of plural urban routes or 'pathways' (Finnegan 1989), I seek to illuminate the salience of music practice, its repetitiveness and its distinctive importance in everyday life. The pluralistic nature of urban pathways also reflects the heterogeneity of 'the local' and of the local *êthos*, which had variably influenced equally real perspectives and narratives about the city. The diverse and sometimes competing nature of musical pathways had

also sparked the emergence of conflicting views and practices, that is, of different 'minds' and 'attitudes'. This thesis deals with one set of attitudes and ideas of 'like-minded' individuals. Rather than focusing upon a music genre or a specific 'sound' it grapples with the modes of conduct and practical judgements, as well as the discursive attitudes and explicit practices relevant *to* the enactment of music, but also *about* its enactment. Therefore, I focus upon a network of individuals that operated under the rubric of what I will identify not as 'nae wave', but as 'Do-it-Yourself' (DiY) – following my informants' rejection of the former term and loose identification with the latter.

Let me pause here to stress that this thesis is not about 'punk'. In fact, as I have stated, my ethnographic account does not refer to *any* particular music genre. The musical diversity within the DiY cohort positively precludes such a focus. The use of 'Do-it-Yourself' in popular discourse and in a vast array of unrelated contexts to convey different practices has not only obscured the meaning of the term, but has further distanced it from its privileged association with punk or music as such. My informants' practices shared similarities with the punk *êthos* and they were aware of its legacy. Without the emergence of punk in the late 1970s, and thus of a DiY *êthos* in music, with the message that 'anyone could do it', the face of music would be totally different today. However, neither the musico-aesthetic and stylistic debates about punk, nor the stereotypical clichés and moral panics, nor the contested claims about continuity and 'authenticity' find a direct parallel to the music, views and practices of my informants.[3]

The crucial similarity between DiY as it is employed here and punk is nicely identified by the late D. Boon from the band *The Minutemen*, who famously stated that 'punk is whatever we made it to be'.[4] This explains why Ruth – and in fact *all* my informants –

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[3] For a thorough overview of the academic and popular literature on punk, see Gordon (2005: 13-45).

[4] There is no available reference or official source for this quote. D. Boon co-authored a song with the same title for *The Way Things Work*, the debut album by American improvisation band *Unknown Instructors*. *The Minutemen* were a punk rock band from San Pedro, California, active between 1980-1985 (see Azerrad 2001: 61-94).

was unsure of the definition of nae wave (or DiY). The ill-defined nature of DiY was not predicated upon a disinterest in its meaning but upon the understanding that it consisted of fluid and ever evolving practices. These practices did not hark back to a DiY archetypical ideal but were pragmatic responses to shifting financial, social and practical circumstances. As a result, DiY was firmly rooted in practical necessity but also in the desire to make music in an *ethical* manner. A DiY *êthos* or 'ethic' was seen as something to be formed and renewed indefinitely rather than a package of rules to be applied. Hence 'a' (and not 'the') DiY *êthos*, which is how I refer to it throughout. In order to highlight the ethical qualities of DiY practice, I conceive of *êthos* as 'a way of being and of behavior' (Foucault 1997: 286).

This *êthos*-in-flux was in conflict with what was considered 'unethical' practice on the part of other local music actors, who employed a 'business-like' approach by privileging financial gains without paying attention to the harmful effects of their conduct. This unethical conduct was comprised of live music promoters not paying bands that performed at their events, requesting musicians to sell tickets on their behalf in order to become eligible for payment,[5] and a lack of interest in the music or concern for the well-being of bands in the line-up. In short, the cultivation of a DiY *êthos* was opposed to the exploitation of musicians and was geared towards a positive attitude and a self-sufficient approach. In doing so, my informants sought to realize an ethical mode of music-making and, by extension, to bring about an ethical self. Thus, DiY practitioners set themselves apart from other local actors neither musically nor aesthetically, but through the cultivation of different ethical dispositions.

My ethnographic account, therefore, clearly diverges from debates about music, aesthetic boundaries, or punk, and instead delves into ethical debates and specifically how these informed the everyday reflection and practice of individuals who strived to

[5] Also known as 'pay-to-play'. Young and unknown bands were sometimes being exploited by certain promoters. Bands would be asked to sell an allocated number of tickets, otherwise they would not receive payment for their performance (see Chapter 6). The pay-to-play model is not limited to this practice and may also involve the band directly paying a fee to the promoter (see Webster 2011: 83-85).

become ethical subjects. In the remainder of the thesis, following the writings of Michel Foucault on ethics and what he termed 'techniques' or 'technologies of the self' [*techniques*/*technologies de soi*] (1982, 1985, 1986, 1997, 2005), I shall argue that practices such as playing an instrument, reflecting on the ways in which a music event should be set-up and promoted, preparing oneself for performance, producing posters, paying bands and taking care of one's vocal chords, were all powerful ethical techniques. These were sought in order to equip my informants with particular sensibilities and capacities consistent with a DiY *êthos*, and to confer the ethical selves that these individuals wished to realize. I shall further argue, following Foucault, that such conscious ethical practices can only be perceived as practices of *freedom*. My general aim then is to ethnographically study music in terms of the ethical and, conversely, ethics in terms of the musical by treating music practice as an *ethical* practice.

Saying that music represents a site that is particularly conducive to the study of ethics and freedom may raise some eyebrows. Surely 'amateur' music is simply 'leisure'? And clearly ethics and freedom have nothing to do with 'fun' but belong instead to the realm of the 'serious', a place for religion, science, politics and society? For example, as James Laidlaw contends in an influential article that has largely set the tone for the resurgence of an anthropological interest in the subject of ethics, it is 'in formalized religious techniques of the self' that:

> [T]he ambition of shaping the self is explicit, and is informed by sophisticated theoretical reflection, as it is *not*, perhaps, when people join a voluntary association of some kind, or change the way they dress, or take to buying recycled washing powder. They are doubtless *much more powerful techniques of the self than these more do-it-yourself activities* (Laidlaw 2002: 326-327, emphasis added).

However, in a turn of phrase crucial for my argument, Laidlaw explains: '*But these, too, may be instances of the exercise of ethical freedom*' (2002: 327, emphasis added). Laidlaw does not use the term 'Do-it-Yourself' in relation to music, but his conviction that practices of self-deliberation and formation in everyday, mundane contexts reflect

instances of ethical freedom – the freedom to become the person one wishes to be – is the starting point for my argument. It is this idea which, along with a focus on ethics as Aristotelian practice and as intrinsically ordinary (Lambek 2000, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), squarely places my ethnography within the anthropological study of ethics.

This is where, I believe, the distinctive contribution of this thesis lies, in the sense that there is *no* ethnographic account that explicitly considers the relationship between popular music and ethics. Furthermore, this contribution is distinctively 'musical' because it seeks to examine not only how music 'fits' within an anthropology of ethics but how, if at all, we can come up with 'musical' ways to think about ethics. It should be clear that, by 'anthropology of ethics', I do not wish to invoke professional standards of ethical conduct, that is, the 'ethics of anthropology'.[6] Nor do I conceive of ethics within a legalistic jargon of bio-ethics or human rights. Rather, I approach the ethical as a site of self-formation and as an everyday process where ordinary people strive in different ways to carve out an ethical life.

I should confess that it had never occurred to me when embarking on fieldwork that I would end up exploring the nexus between music and ethics. Yet I suspect I am not alone in taking for granted that music is a form of human activity that brings plenitude and which has self-evident benefits for musicians and listeners alike to such an extent that they normally go without saying. In other words, music is so attached to our experience of everyday life and so close to our definition of 'the good' that we tend to forget or disregard its intrinsically ethical dimension and that, when playing or listening to music for its own sake, the goods are *internal* to these practices (MacIntyre 1981). The classical notion of music *per se* as having the capacity to 'refine morals' – a notion that goes back to Plato and Aristotle – needs qualification (e.g. Riethmüller 2008). As I shall demonstrate, music practices can facilitate ethical self-fashioning in various ways, but the idea that music is inherently 'ethical' should be approached with caution.

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[6] See, for example, Caplan (2003), Carrithers (2005), Evens (2008), Fluehr-Lobban (1991), Meskell & Pels (2005) and Strathern (2000).

But my fieldwork taught me more than this. It showed me, for example, how music practices can be 'unethical'. Although I began my research without ethics in my ethnographic purview, the frequent talk of ethics that I encountered in the field brought these matters into dizzying focus. I had not initially sought to study 'local morality', nor is what follows an 'after the fact analysis' (Zigon 2008: 8). Rather, ethics *emerged* as a central theme during my fieldwork. For the most part, the ways in which the terms 'ethics' and 'morality' entered conversations were not informed by consistent and agreed-upon definitions and meanings – no more or less consistently than we use the terms in everyday discourse.

Moreover, these words did not always appear in all conversations about ethical or unethical practices, despite these conversations *being* about these things. Hence, I have not confined my ethnographic description within instances, acts and utterances that my informants explicitly framed in terms of 'ethics' or 'morality' (see Rogers 2009: 24-25). This would dramatically diminish the potential to elucidate the ethical polyvalence and ambivalence of music practice. It would further inhibit me from tracing the complex interrelationships and intersubjective encounters, that is, the pedagogical aspects that pervaded ethical discourse and practice in the efforts of individuals to occupy, negotiate and expand specific ethical subject positions (Faubion 2011).

My ethnographic account revolves around both the ethical reasoning and the cultivation of dispositions conducive to a DiY *êthos*. Furthermore, because of the multi-sensory ways in which individuals relate to music, music practices should first and foremost be conceived of as bodily practices: touching and playing an instrument, looking at the performers on stage, smelling freshly pressed vinyl, listening to sounds, dancing to the rhythm or feeling the vibrations on one's body are all instances in which haptic, olfactory, visual, aural and kinesthetic elements merge in what is a profoundly visceral experience. This sensory interplay (Classen 1993, 1997) found its expression in *Divorce*'s music, and this is perhaps the reason why its members described the band's music exclusively in bodily terms.

However, this sensory kaleidoscope is the hallmark of *all* musical experience as is the fact that making music is a 'technical' operation – exactly as technologies of the self are (Faubion 2001a: 93). In dissolving – via Aristotle – the Socratic distinction between the 'technical' and the 'ethical', Foucault's technologies of self-formation highlight the manner in which repetitive bodily practices are intrinsic to ethical projects. Nevertheless, for Foucault, bodily technologies are not the only type of exercises pertinent to ethical cultivation and, although he focuses mainly upon techniques from the classical period, he argues that different forms of technologies of the self can be found in all societies (1997: 87, 277).

Undoubtedly, the Aristotelian meta-virtue of 'practical wisdom' or *phronêsis* should be distinguished from the derivatives of *techne* (Lambek 2000), but the practical resonance of virtues at least allows us to consider music and ethics as forms of skilled practice (Ingold 2000; Widlok 2004). Both require the *acquisition* of the skills necessary for the project at hand, albeit ones that do not pre-exist as a package of rules but emerge through the interaction between practitioners, (ethical) materials and the environment in which they are situated. Consequently, insofar as music becomes a skilled ethical operation, it invites an intersubjective approach to ethics rather than a focus on the 'subject', and much less the 'individual' (Faubion 2011).

In drawing an analogy between Ingold's anthropology of skill and DiY music-making, I suggest that the nature of DiY as an ethical practice is better perceived as a form of 'weaving'. Specifically, the lack of a DiY 'design' means that the form of the practice (and by extension the ethical self) gradually emerges in a process that is generative and not merely revelatory, and it comes into being within a complex field of forces in an environment. For Ingold, weaving 'continues for as long as life goes on – punctuated but not terminated by the appearance of the pieces that it successively brings into being' (2000: 348).

The urban and ethical environment I encountered in Glasgow did not set my informants apart from other actors engaging in 'unethical' music practices, in a way that would warrant me to draw a sharp distinction. Rather, the latter were a *sine qua non* of DiY practice, in the sense that they were essential elements of the complex web of relations that had given rise to DiY (if anything, as ethical examples to be avoided). Besides, my informants did not speak about the 'evils' of commerce, nor did they, for the most part, perceive creativity and commerce as mutually exclusive (Cohen 1991). Instead, while a DiY *êthos* necessitated the development of different ethical sensibilities and approaches, its associated practices would seek to emulate, appropriate and put to use some of the effective strategies of non-DiY actors. In other words, a DiY *êthos* was not predicated upon what is usually called 'resistance', and the ensuing material and urban 'tactics' (de Certeau 1984) should *not* be seen as 'the weapons of the weak' (Scott 1985). Rather, they were my informants' means to *inhabit* those established practices and norms in the process of becoming ethical subjects (Mahmood 2005). Thus, Glasgow emerged as a site where institutionalized 'strategies' and ever evolving 'tactics' coexisted and interpenetrated (de Certeau 1984).

This demands caution with regards to the established dualism between 'agency' and 'structure', and calls for a reexamination of agency as distributed rather than subjective (Laidlaw 2010b), or as the outcome of amoral 'causality' (Latour 2005, cf. 2010). It further demonstrates how the politics of 'DiY culture' (McKay 1996, 1998), caught up in a language of 'resistance', have disregarded both the fact that DiY is not dependent upon a pre-existent cultural consensus and that 'politics', in the conventional sense of the term, need *not* be the hallmark of DiY. By contrast, the 'political' power of DiY is rooted in its transformative ethical potential. As Mahmood (2005) has shown, this should not trick us into declaring the apolitical character of ethical practices, but it should shift our attention to their political efficacy through the ethical transformations they engender.

The upshot of this argument is that despite the long genealogy and prevalence of agency in social theory (Keane 2003), and contrary to what a vertical dichotomy between agency and structure presumes, 'more agency' does not equal 'more freedom' (Laidlaw 2010b). Hence the need to distinguish ethical freedom from 'liberation', and ground the former not, I emphasize, in subjective, but intersubjective ethical acts that *make* men and women free and which allow subjects to excel and shape the conditions of their own existence (Arendt 1998 [1958]; Faubion 2011; Foucault 1982, 1997; Hirschkind 2006; Laidlaw 2002; Mahmood 2005). This is DiY 'politics'.

Ethical practice, then, involves neither passivity, nor subjection, but rather the *active* manner in which individuals are compelled to form ethical selves within intersubjective environments. As I have argued, music practice as a situated practice enveloped the city and unfolded onto the urban fabric, which emerged as an ethical modality. Therefore, the spatial practices inextricably related to the culmination of a DiY *êthos* sought to inhabit established norms, but also the city itself, both literally and figuratively.

Thus, music-making represented the main way in which my informants sought to exercise their right to the city (Lefebvre 1996, 2003; see also Amin & Thrift 2002; Harvey 2008; Mitchell 2003). Crucially, this right was an ethical right and not merely a demand for the fair use of urban resources. It was my informants' right to realize an ethical life in the city (Baxstrom 2008) and to change themselves through effecting changes in the urban fabric (Harvey 2008).[7] The city thus emerged '*as a space of moral action*' (Hirschkind 2006: 22) and music practice as a form of urban orientation and ethical becoming. Cultivating a DiY *êthos* involved a process whereby music and the city were mutually constituted. Therefore, the reciprocal relationship between music and the city as a distinctive form of ethical urban life is one of the central tenets of my argument.

[7] See Attoh (2011) for an overview of the diverse conceptions of 'rights' by scholars that have employed Lefebvre's idea of the right to the city.

However, what follows is *not* an ethnography *in* the city or *of* the city (Low 1996) but of quotidian activities that constitute the fabric of everyday life and of music practices that sustain, reproduce and reform it. As such, this thesis does not seek to examine these practices from a perspective that would necessarily be relevant to 'urban anthropology'. I see musical 'pathways' (Finnegan 1989) as an agglomeration of partially improvised (Hallam & Ingold 2007) everyday ethical practices and a distinctively 'local' – but not localized – form of collective ethical action (Lambek 2011). Therefore, I conceive of urban pathways as intersecting and spatially embedded routes running through the city, but first and foremost as ethical life trajectories constituted by specific acts of habitation.

With special reference to the music collective *Winning Sperm Party* – the first of the three music actors that comprise my ethnographic focus – I will demonstrate how, from a pluralism of urban routes in a multi-temporal city, musical pathways were of high importance to my informants' everyday lives and ordered their urban existence around repetitive music practices. The regularity and periodicity of these practices blended urban space and time and obtained their own distinctive rhythms (Lefebvre 2004), which were the outcome of spatial and temporal appropriations. The numerous bands associated with the music collective, the collective's promotional tactics in the organization of music events and its function as a record label meant that *Winning Sperm Party* constituted a DiY actor *par excellence*. The conjunction of music and the urban environment pervaded their practice. This was particularly evident in their appropriation of urban spaces for performances and in the mundane routines associated with promotional activities that involved the re-enactment of well-trodden pathways.

The musical construction of place (Stokes 1994) was effected through sustained practices of sharing resources within an extended network of individuals (Widlok 2004). This sharing was not perceived as a series of transactions but as having the capacity to bring about and sustain music-making *per se*. As such, sharing was intrinsically good (MacIntyre 1981) – an 'actuality' in Aristotle's sense [*energeia*] (Arendt 1998 [1958]) –

and part of an ethical repertoire geared towards immanence, that is, 'life as lived for itself' (Lambek 2010a: 3). Sharing as virtuous action sought to extend the circle of individuals who could enjoy the resources at hand rather than establish a transactional network. This is not to say that it had no practical *function*. However, the virtue of sharing allows me to stress, as the collective did, that means should not necessarily be distinguished from ends. For Aristotle, 'human life lived at its best' involves 'the exercise of the virtues' as 'a necessary and central part of such a life, not merely a preparatory exercise to secure such a life' (MacIntyre 1981: 149).

Not only does the virtue of sharing undercut notions of crude utilitarianism but also challenges established notions of professionalism based on conceptions of 'work' and 'livelihood'. On this plane, sharing renders problematic the professional/amateur dichotomy, the definition of which depends upon the presence or absence of financial rewards. The ethics of care upon which sharing is firmly rooted signals the reconceptualization of 'amateurs' and 'professionals' on the basis of situated ethical action and commitment (Lambek 2010b), and undermines a rigid distinction between those who 'do it for love' and those who engage in it 'for money' (Baily 1988; Cottrell 2004; Finnegan 1989; Merriam 1964).

Such an 'attitude', to recall Alistair's words, was part of the ethical dispositions that blurred and, in fact, reversed this conventional distinction: being professional meant you cared about the bands you hosted and the music they played, that you paid all the bands in the line-up and that you were genuinely dedicated and committed to the event. Moreover, your investment of personal time and effort aimed to cater for the bands' requirements, which were agreed upon verbally. This meant that trust was the only form of contract[8] and that you attended to the needs of band members beyond the functional requirements of the gig by being *there* and by being friendly, accommodating and truly engaged with the event.

[8] For a critical examination of the notion of 'trust', see Jiménez (2011). For Jiménez, trust is not 'diaphanous' but 'works by creating its own preconditions of existence, which must in turn be certified as trustworthy' (ibid.: 193).

Conversely, an amateur was someone that enforced a high level of organization, reflecting a strict timeline, and who was not genuinely interested in the music of the bands he or she hosted. After the agreed requirements – usually outlined in a contract – were met, an amateur would be absent for the duration of the event. Finally, he or she might not pay the support bands. Thus, amateurs would ultimately 'exploit' young bands to benefit themselves financially.

Several bands from the DiY cohort had fallen victim to the pay-to-play policies of professional promoters. *Divorce*, who to my knowledge had never performed under such a contract, had rejected this policy outright. My ethnographic focus on the band primarily seeks to illuminate the musical aspects of a DiY *êthos* through the examination of the bodily technologies, affects and sensualities that contribute to ethical self-formation. I do not perceive *Divorce* as *the* typical DiY band from Glasgow, and I recognize that lack of space makes it impossible to consider in detail (or even mention) the practices of many other affiliated bands that would serve my purposes equally well. However, *Divorce* did seem to exemplify the cultivation of attitudes and dispositions conducive to the realization of a DiY *êthos*. As one of the main representatives of 'nae wave' they enjoyed a certain degree of musical capital and recognition, both locally and beyond the city limits.

This, as well as the collective's practice of sharing digital music files through their website are two instances that alerted me to the need to rethink 'the local' and the overlapping, but not complete, identification of my informants and their practices with Glasgow. *Divorce* also made me realize that gender relations would not find a place on my research agenda. As evident in the four to one ratio in the band, for example, women had an active role in the DiY network. This does not mean that gender did not play a role. However, the undeniable gender bias that has historically permeated music practices (e.g. Leonard 2007; Reddington 2007; Whiteley 1997) was not translated into the subordination of women among my informants. This was based not only upon my personal observations, but on the words of my female informants.

What renders *Divorce* particularly appropriate for my argument is what I can only term as the *intensity* of their music and its 'affecting presence' (Armstrong 1971). This is not an aesthetic judgement or a judgement of taste, but a designation of the bodily affects and the ethical predilections that their music afforded. Thus, *Divorce* and their music represent an ethnographic examination of the bodily regimes and affects (Blacking 1979; Connolly 2002; Massumi 2002; Mazzarella 2009), the sensuous articulations (Classen 1993, 1997; Howes 2003; Seremetakis 1994), and the corporeal technologies (Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005), which undergirded and synergistically fashioned and honed ethics. Rather than embarking on a phenomenological approach, I ground my analysis of this ethics of 'embodied musicality' on concrete practices and the everyday *work* taken up by my informants, and upon the ways in which their acts elicited particular sensibilities and aptitudes.

Therefore, I treat affect as a tendency and a potential that is realized in action and as a tool with which to consider the visceral modes of ethical self-formation. Without ascribing to a biological determinism, I argue that by attending to the sensory and affective registers in which music interacts with the body we will be better positioned to address questions of intentionality and subjectivity with regards to ethical cultivation. Furthermore, I do not treat the body merely as a material entity upon which the external environment impinges, but as a dynamic and sensorially rich interface that actively partakes in the production of sensuous sociality (Chau 2008). Thus, I perceive affects as *conditions* that enable the formation of ethical subjects and within which these subjects-in-becoming circulate and interact (Richard & Rudnyckyj 2009), rather than reified entities traveling between autonomous bodies.

In paying ethnographic attention to the kinetics and the bodily conformity that music-making necessitates, I argue that specific forms of 'docility' and etiquette, partly incited by music's affective impingements, were common among audience members. Bodily deportment encouraged the internalization of a contextualized and ethically appropriate behaviour. Audiences *actively* took part in performances, even when silent reception

characterized their conduct. To treat audiences as an integral component of musical performances might initially seem strange. However, different performances *necessitated* and *invoked* different audience behaviours, without which the former could not be deemed successful. Thus, with audiences being an absolutely essential part of successful performances, audience members could be seen as '"musicians" of a kind' (Finnegan 1989: 15; see also Blacking 1971; Small 1998).

However, cultivating a DiY *êthos* as a conscious practice of freedom could not be confined to corporeal technologies of the self, and Foucault's writings on ethics go beyond the technical execution of practices of self-fashioning. Moreover, Faubion (2011) argues that Foucault's approach is in need of modification in order to enable us to explicitly account for the variegated judgements that mediate between the subject's relation to the 'rule' and a training regime. Judgement also informs the actual choices that subjects make in ethically shaping themselves into certain kinds of persons. As I mentioned above, DiY lacked a 'canon' and there was no 'rule' to which individuals could relate. How, then, did my informants seek to realize an *êthos* that could not be 'authenticated'? Was it only a matter of personal opinion and choice?

I think not. The fact that a DiY ideal was missing did not preclude my informants from cultivating an *êthos* on the basis of available examples (Faubion 2011; Humphrey 1997). This elucidated the pedagogies of self-making as an integral aspect of music-making and further demonstrated the nature of DiY as a practice that dissolved the distinctions between 'design' and execution, practitioners and followers, producers and consumers. It also highlighted the emergent nature of this practice and the ethical debates that lay at the heart of a fluid but *not* precarious mode of cultural production, which had to be continuously molded and reformed.

The DiY local music promoter *Cry Parrot* ethnographically exemplifies these points. Largely a solo operation, *Cry Parrot* was a unique case among my informants due to the fact that Stuart, who was the main person behind it, and his practice were generally

considered to be on the verge between having an 'accepted' DiY *êthos* and a quasi-commercial outlook. Stuart's trajectory over the course of my fieldwork provided me the opportunity to observe the subtle and not-so-subtle changes in his practice and in his alleged conversion from a 'DiY promoter' to an 'independent promoter'.

Stuart's decisions with regards the functioning and *êthos* of *Cry Parrot* were thought out in painstaking detail and this process often took the form of a 'moral torment' (Robbins 2004). Stuart was clearly concerned and perplexed about the ethical nature of different promotional practices. Not knowing which ethical path to follow was not the real dilemma, though. What Stuart's 'critics', who included some of my informants, seemed to have missed was that Stuart was not seeking to become the occupant of a non-DiY subject position.

Rather, he was searching for ways to expand and adjust the DiY position's scope in order to make it both ethically and financially sustainable in the long term. Stuart's apparent shift reflected a pragmatic response and his desire to confront the challenges of what he perceived as a stigmatized and thus ineffective domain, without compromising his musical and aesthetic choices (Hesmondhalgh 1999). *Cry Parrot* exemplified the polyphony as well as the divergence among my informants about what constituted DiY and also pointed to the intrinsic temporality of music practice – its futurity as well as its immanence. Finally, it indicated the ways in which judgements and reflexive and self-reflexive technologies of the self, such as thinking and discursive processes, could become the means towards ethical self-formation.

By grappling with these issues, in this thesis I hope to ethnographically demonstrate that anthropologists could augment the methodological, analytical and ethnographic apparatus of the discipline, should they decide to take seriously the music that most (if not all) encounter in the field. At the very least, I intend to show that by dissolving music into everyday practice, and specifically social and ethical practice, it becomes the very stuff of anthropology, and anthropology emerges as musically 'relevant'. Although

this thesis treats music and ethics as inextricably linked, I argue for an anthropology of music *ethics*. This overcomes the pervasive bias of music as 'special' and as a separate and abstracted domain of human activity, but retains the primacy of the musicality that orchestrates the everyday lives of many anthropological subjects. In providing an *êthography of music practices* (rather than an ethnography of music or a musical ethnography), I wish to underscore the ubiquity of music in all its ordinariness and mundane glory, how its presence makes people's lives more meaningful, and why it might compel them to become ethical subjects.[9]

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The data collection techniques and strategies that anthropologists employ during fieldwork vary greatly. The defining characteristics of the ethnographer are 'shameless eclecticism' and 'methodological opportunism' (Suttles cited in Jackson 1985: 169). This thesis is based upon 18 months of fieldwork conducted between January 2010 and June 2011. It consisted of a combination of intensive participant observation, unstructured/semi-structured interviews, online research and the use of visual and written documentary sources. For the whole period I was residing in Edinburgh, and commuted to Glasgow by train or bus. Observations and interviews would normally take place in the evening and I would spend the day at home writing-up my fieldnotes, analyzing and reflecting on my findings, browsing the videos and pictures I had taken the night before, as well as obtaining further information online.

This '*non*-full-time involvement' (Finnegan 1989: 344) was dictated by the focus of my study, which occurred on a part-time basis. The majority of my informants – and certainly all the members of *Winning Sperm Party*, *Divorce* and *Cry Parrot* – were making music in between their other commitments (the reverse may be truer), such as work or studies. In other words, there was no need for me to *be there* during the day

[9] The term *êthography* should not be conflated with the folkloric realism of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Greek literature, known as *ithografia* or *ethographia* [*ήθογραφία*] (see e.g. Beaton 1982).

(Geertz 1988; Watson 1999) since the great bulk of the activities relating to my research questions took place in the evening. Nevertheless, I did find myself in the city several days for the purposes of interviews, daytime talks and events and to visit places of interest. Furthermore, it is useful to bear in mind that I knew Glasgow long before I decided to embark on fieldwork there, something which greatly facilitated my 'entrance' to the field. In many ways, it was experienced as if a part of my personal life had become my object of study.

Moreover, it was not only I who lived outside Glasgow during the period of my fieldwork but certain key informants too: Alistair lived in Edinburgh – where I interviewed him for the first time – and Stuart commuted to Glasgow from Motherwell. Hence the anthropological imperative of 'being there' had become 'being there...and there...and there!' (Hannerz 2003; Marcus 1995) and also raised questions about 'being...where?' (Coleman & Collins 2006). After all, I conducted additional interviews in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Rosebank, I followed *Divorce* on their second 2010 UK tour, I met some of my informants at a festival in the South-West of England and constantly monitored their virtual spaces. This raised questions about anthropological fieldwork *per se* and also alerted me to the problematic notion of 'the local'. Being 'in' Glasgow, then, was complex and entailed a link to other places, which necessitated the reconsideration of 'the local' and, by extension, of my 'field site'.

This situation was intensified by the urban nature of my research. The plural urban landscape comprises diverse, even contradictory urban routes and thus affords multiple interpretations and representations. Consequently, urban ethnography presents challenges that small-scale research in rural places does not (and vice versa), because the subtlety of ethnographic description might be outweighed by issues of representativeness due to the partiality of the undertaking (Jackson 1985: 170; Jacobs 1993: 828). This 'partial truth', as Clifford and Marcus put it in their introduction to *Writing Culture* (1986), is further reflected by the unavoidable unevenness in the distribution of my ethnographic focus in my effort to account for at least *some* of this

diversity. The dispersed creativity I encountered while in the field rendered my ethnographic focus a challenging affair. At different points in the process my attention was focused on different individuals, actors and themes. However, as Hannerz noted some time ago, '[t]he construction of whole lives may seem to be biography rather than ethnography' (1980: 255).

Issues of generalization and typicality further emerge by my conscious choice to focus upon specific music actors for reasons outlined above. This allows for a deeper examination of the conventions and constraints involved in music-making in the city, but raises the question of how typical these actors are within the particular context and whether it is possible to do meaningful generalizations (Cohen 1993: 125, 2007: 233). Therefore, I will refrain from making sweeping generalizations about the city as a whole. Instead, I have opted for a more pluralistic, kaleidoscopic representation of the locality and its inhabitants, as well as of the diverse practices of my informants.

Being able to detach myself from the field on a daily basis provided the necessary space and time to produce the building blocks of my ethnography through the uninterrupted writing of fieldnotes. It further ensured that I would avoid the trap of becoming *too* much of an 'insider'. Despite the fact that 'going native' is more of an idea within anthropology rather than a common practice (Hannerz 2006: 34; Sluka & Robben 2007: 14), and although the insider/outsider distinction should be rather perceived as a complex continuum (Narayan 1993), certain characteristics of my identity both inhibited and facilitated my fieldwork. For example, originating from abroad and having a non-British accent seemed to be an advantage. This mattered not because I avoided classification in terms of 'class' (Fonarow 2006: 16) but because I presented myself and behaved as I was: a sympathetic foreigner who showed an acute interest in learning what people were doing and listening to what they had to say about their practice. Indeed, I was advised that foreign researchers in fieldwork contexts similar to mine seemed to be obtaining a wealth of data (Sara Cohen, personal communication).

On the other hand, a single male in a music venue might not be readily approachable to strangers, especially female participants who represented a large segment of the DiY cohort. Nevertheless, issues of accessibility rarely emerged, due to the fact that a snowball effect took hold soon after I first met with Alistair. This meant that the close-knit DiY network and especially my key informants became aware of my identity as a researcher from early on, which eased my transition and shifted my status from an outsider to an 'insider'. Last but not least, the definition of 'the field' has been contested and in my case it cannot be perceived as a bounded locus or as being neatly separated from my everyday life over the last eight years (Amit 2000; Fox 1991). Therefore, I have not distinguished between the informal data collection before and during the preparation stage, the more intensive 'formal' process of ethnographic immersion and the writing process. Entering and leaving the field and turning from an outsider to an insider and back to an outsider were overlapping processes and the outcomes of a slow transition rather than specific, momentary events.

My previous knowledge notwithstanding, maintaining a balanced naivety that would motivate my informants to speak more and in detail (Bernard 2006: 366-368), certainly helped. However, a sympathetic approach was not peculiar to the researcher. The first time I met with *Winning Sperm Party* Colin declared that, because I was a social anthropologist, he knew that I had to 'get the feel for it' and that this was the reason why I had to attend numerous DiY music events. Likewise, Eileen from *Synergy Concerts*, a local independent promoter, stated that she preferred to have interviews with anthropologists rather than journalists because anthropological questions were 'more interesting'.

This reversed received anthropological wisdom whereby subjects tend to suspect participant observers of being 'spies' of some sort (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 77; O'Reilly 2005: 85). It further engendered a dialogical and collaborative approach (Clifford & Marcus 1986; Marcus 2008a), with informants *actively* helping out with my research by introducing me or contacting potential interviewees on my behalf, by

inviting me to specific events that *they* thought were related to my fieldwork, by making suggestions on relevant readings and by offering friendly advice on what to include in the thesis. Most of the individuals I interacted with beyond a simple introduction also expressed their intention to read the final draft (and I assume to comment on it). As Marcus puts it:

> In other words, once the "reflexive" subject is now the only kind of subject the anthropologist encounters, and where the reflexivity of the subject exists in, or overlaps with, the same intellectual universe that informs the researcher (necessarily making the subject his epistemic partner, so to speak, in the conduct of research), then "collaboration" replaces the trope of "apprenticeship" (or its alternatives) as defining the "scene" of fieldwork encounter (2008b: 7)

Anthropologist and research subjects are conceived as collaborators in a multi-sited field (Marcus 1995, 2008a, 2008b), partaking in a 'shared anthropology' [*anthropologie partagée*] (Rouch 2003). Multi-sited does not only refer to a juxtaposition of different places within or outside of the city limits where music practices take place. It is also points towards the different conceptualizations of music and the locality, and the conflicting interpretations that inhabit the everyday lives and imagination of research participants. 'Reflexivity' was intrinsically related to my own conduct and I was particularly careful about the ways in which I presented myself in the field by paying attention to similarities and differences, equalities but also inequalities (Cohen 1993: 134).

I did not rely on an elaborate preparation before 'entering' the field, in the sense of locating appropriate music actors to enlist in my project. This was largely because, from the outside, I was unsure of what 'appropriate' meant. Nevertheless, I did not face practical difficulties in obtaining the necessary ethnographic material. Similar to my case, Cohen had spent a considerable amount of time searching for bands after she had arrived in Liverpool 'full of strategies on how to seek out bands and establish contacts in the music world' (1991: 1). My material was mainly collected through participant observation but the term requires clarification.

A participant observer oscillates between the two poles of participation and observation, while most anthropologists would situate themselves somewhat ambiguously in the middle of the spectrum (Bernard 2006: 347). Wolcott contends that anthropologists should participate as little as they have to in order to obtain their data (1999: 48-49). This is what I attempted to do. Clearly, becoming a 'fly on the wall' is hardly possible and I did 'participate' in several instances – briefly helping out on the door at music events, carrying music equipment and other paraphernalia, and other basic tasks. However, I never took part in musical performances by playing an instrument, despite having the opportunity. My participation was also inevitably restricted due to the urban nature of the research. It was simply impossible to take part in all of the activities of overlapping and extended networks of individuals engaging in myriad practices (see Finnegan 1989: 342).

Because the DiY network was mobilized and gathered around music events, it is within these contexts that my ethnographic attention was placed. Gigs and the practical processes culminating in and following music events were perhaps the most valuable sources of first-hand information on a wide range of musical and extra-musical activities. Other practices, such as the communications pertinent to the organization of music events or the production of records were not readily observable. For example, Stuart from *Cry Parrot* organized everything by email, while *Winning Sperm Party* had outsourced the pressing of vinyls and CDs to individuals or companies at home and abroad. Music events were also contexts germane to social interaction and it was in these places that I was first introduced to most of my informants.

The common perception, according to which doing fieldwork in music means that one has 'too much fun', is simply false. As Bigenho (2008: 31) and Herzfeld (2001: 312) have succinctly pointed out, such an association tends to question the legitimacy of an anthropological engagement with media forms and is seen as diminishing the anthropologist's potential to contribute anything of use theoretically. Besides, ethnomusicologist Luis-Manuel Garcia (2012) argues in his detailed 'fieldwork guide'

on nightlife research that 'nocturnal' ethnographers often have to confront distinctive challenges, which 'daylight' ethnographers might not face. These include issues relating to building 'rapport' with individuals that seek to have 'fun' and 'let go', etiquette, adverse conditions (lack of light, heat, noise), the costly nature of such fieldwork (tickets, door charges) and the profound interference with the researcher's circadian rhythms, among others. Despite all this, I would certainly hesitate to gloss my field as a 'field of screams' (Pollard 2009).

Although my competence as an observer and my 'explicit awareness' (Bernard 2006: 364-366) were gradually sharpened as my fieldwork unfolded, my memory was only one data collection depository during the sessions of participant observation. I also had to rely on what is referred to as 'scratch notes', a mnemonic word or phrase that will later be transformed into fuller notes (Sanjek 1990: 95-99). Depending on the circumstances, I would use my return trip to Edinburgh to outline the structure of these fuller fieldnotes, to be written the following morning. The use of fieldnotes forms the main material for my post-fieldwork analysis (Emerson *et al* 1995; Sanjek 1990).

However, it is rarely the case that a comprehensive ethnographic account of music performances could be based exclusively on fieldnotes, except if the ethnographer has the opportunity to repeatedly witness the same performance. In popular music though, performances tend to differ every time due to their less rigid 'ritualistic' character. Therefore, I made an extensive use of visual recording techniques. Photography and video enabled me to capture aspects of the action and a level of detail that my memory could not. Proponents of visual research methods (e.g. Banks 2001; Pink 2001; Pink *et al* 2004) have stressed their practical importance but also their inherent ability for detailed cultural representation.

My use of visual media is geared towards enriching the detail of my descriptions, rather than images constituting objects of research in themselves. Taking scratch notes, pictures and videos was dictated by the event at hand and my personal judgement with

regards to the level of the breach of etiquette that such an action would impose. Visual documentation was complemented by regularly collecting posters, flyers, fanzines and other local publications, pins, t-shirts, vinyl records, CDs, cassette tapes, tickets (where applicable) and other relevant materials. Finally, I did not record the music of bands and musicians that participated in the research, for the simple reason that it was publicly available from various sources.

Apart from the invaluable informal discussions that I engaged in before, during and after music events, I have had the opportunity to follow up specific points and converse extensively with my informants in the context of 'interviews'. I have placed the word in quotation marks to convey the fact that, although these discussions were pre-scheduled, audio-recorded and fully transcribed later on, I neither prepared specific questions, nor did I seek to consciously direct the discussion. Ruth Finnegan notes that she conducted only a few 'deliberate interviews' during her fieldwork among amateur musicians in Milton Keynes. Although Finnegan distinguishes these from 'the many informal conversations' she had, she is still reluctant to label them as 'interviews' (1989: 344).

Most of the important information obtained through interviews was the result of follow-up questions, which cannot be prepared beforehand (Rubin & Rubin 1995: 151). Probing was employed in order to extract additional information and I made use of an open-ended form of questions out of the various types available (see Kvale 1996). These conversations took place in a relaxed and open way, with no specific topics to be covered or predetermined questions to be posed. This was deliberate for two reasons: first, my goal was to gain a solid background knowledge of the context within which music practices happened, therefore every detail was important – at least initially. Second, during the first few months in the field I attempted to *discover* the right questions to ask in a socially and culturally informed manner in order to avoid distortion (Cohen 1984: 225; Spradley 1979: 83-84).

Thus, by employing a strategy of 'deep hanging out' (Rosaldo cited in Wolcott 1999: 14), I opted to let the relevant themes emerge in due course (Adler & Adler 1994: 382). Some of my key informants were interviewed twice in this manner. Some individuals were interviewed but their useful insights do not appear in this thesis, though they contributed to and deepened my understanding and knowledge of the field. I did not manage to interview a handful of individuals, as they did not respond to my emails. For the most part, they turned out to be peripheral to my project and they rarely or never attended DiY music events. Most of the interviews were agreed upon in person, but some were arranged over email or text messages.

I have sought to address ethical concerns about anonymity and confidentiality by changing the names of all the individuals that appear in this thesis. However, I have not changed stage names, institutional names or venue names. The imaginative stage and institutional names themselves are analyzed later on. My informants were happy for me to use these names and 'spread the word' about DiY. Informed consent was sought and obtained at all times and, where possible, audio-recorded. However, I did not seek my informants' consent to use information that was publicly available, such as posters, flyers and details that were accessible online.

Obtaining informed consent was confined to individuals with whom I had more than a brief encounter but in all cases I ensured that people became aware of my identity as a researcher, without of course intimidating them by immediately declaring my status. Online information was not only useful as background knowledge but also necessary, in the sense that social media were the primary means of promotion of music events, several of which were announced very close to the day of the event or even on the day. As such, I felt *obliged* to join social media, and specifically Twitter, in order to be kept updated about the diverse and multiple events that were taking place. Sometimes I would attend more than one event on a single evening.

My informants' views on ethical music practices did not coincide with the definitions that other local music actors embraced and put forward. Although a wealth of material was obtained through attending music events organized by other promoters, and where a host of different bands performed, I did not seek to examine the views of individuals who were unrelated to the DiY network. This limits the scope for comparison but it allows me to deeply engage with a loosely coherent set of ideas and practices. Space constraints here, as well as the sheer diversity of ethical and musical opinions and practices in the city, make it impossible to pay credit to the pluralism of competing representations and arguments present in the locality.

Crucially, there are also temporal constraints in the study of ethics, as Faubion notes (2011: 142). Ethical becoming is the outcome of a long process, which leaves its traces on subjects. These are manifested through a particular mode of being and acting in the world, but anthropologists will most likely *not* be able to trace ethical trajectories in their entirety. Thus, ethics is as much a process of the present and future, as it is of history. What makes life worth living and the shaping of ethical selves and ideas are the outcome of historical circumstances and events rather than simply 'pastness', while to which extent all this is affected by different stages in one's life-course is difficult to discern (Mathews 1996: 739-740).

Similarly, Finnegan notes that musical pathways are 'something essentially self-chosen not primarily for monetary reasons but in some sense for their own sake', but she also highlights the need to attend to the various 'patterns of constraints and opportunities that – sometimes partly outside the actors' own awareness – help to draw individuals towards or away from particular paths, or shape the way they tread them' (1989: 316-317). I remain sensitive to these methodological and analytical limitations and I can only partially address this by employing the past tense throughout. This is also consonant with the shifting attitudes and practices that characterized music-making during the time of my fieldwork. I perceive this thesis as a snapshot in time and of my

informants' lives, but I do hope that some of the issues I raise will have a more lasting resonance.

Formal 'methods' aside, I should stress the fact that my fieldwork was a profoundly *sensual* experience. In what follows, I attend to my informants' views, bodily acts, musical activities and ethical practices. However, I cannot disregard that my knowledge about the experience of music and about how music informed certain dispositions among my informants was partly gained *through* music. It was passed down as embodied knowledge by virtue of my attendance of DiY music events. Questions of ethical etiquette, affect, as well as the broader relationship between music and ethics, were put in perspective by paying attention to my own bodily and emotional responses during my exposure to sounds. Although I do not explicitly address the tacit knowledge obtained through my own body, my account has greatly benefited from the conscious reflection following these experiences.

Therefore, I can only agree with Csordas (1993) and his injunction to attend *with* and *to* the body, and to how somatic modes of attention can enrich our ethnographic analyses. The bodily engagements and felt dimensions of fieldwork deserve at least an implicit recognition, especially when the subject matter directly relates to the sensorium, as it does in the cases of sound and dance (see e.g. Feld 1996; Potter 2008; Samuels *et al* 2010; Skinner 2005; Sklar 2000). As Colin from *Winning Sperm Party* put it, as an anthropologist I had to 'get the feel for it'. And Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* utilizes the body as a *tool* and begins from the premise that: 'Rhythm appears as regulated time, governed by rational laws, but in contact with what is least rational in human being: the lived, the carnal, the body' (2004: 9).

Agar's (1996 [1980]) cogent metaphor of the ethnographic process as a 'funnel' that narrows down as the ethnographer gradually reaches 'saturation' neatly matches my experience. Ellen (1984) aptly subtitled her edited volume on ethnographic research methods as 'a guide to general conduct'. Although the book covers every formal aspect

of ethnographic fieldwork, it suggests practices, techniques and strategies that fieldworkers may or may not choose to follow. I have outlined my fieldwork experience and described how 'methods' have contributed towards reaching my goal. However, ethnography is fluid and emerges dialogically and on the spot. It is a matter of thorough preparation as much as improvisation, because it is adventurous and quite unpredictable. Thus, it is almost impossible to describe ethnographic methods in painstaking detail. In many ways these are the characteristics that make ethnography most attractive. A successful ethnographer is one who *enjoys* doing it. As Rubin and Rubin advise us, we have to 'try to think of fieldwork as one long conversation with someone we are fascinated with' (cited in O'Reilly 2005: 127). And I have certainly enjoyed taking part in the conversation.

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For the purpose of clarity I have separated the material into three parts. Part I sets the scene for my ethnographic analysis and the conceptual space that informs it. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of Glasgow and local cultural production with special reference to musical antecedents that have engendered particular approaches to grassroots music-making in the city. In Chapter 2 I draw an outline of my conceptual apparatus by considering various ethnographic works on music and by comparing different analytical frameworks for the study of music collectivities. I also discuss the anthropological literature on ethics and establish a link between the 'ethical' and the 'urban'.

Part II presents my findings organized around the ethnographic examination of three DiY music actors. Chapter 3 considers *Winning Sperm Party* and describes the collective's practices and affiliations by grounding the analysis in questions about the relationship between urban musical pathways, practices of sharing and virtuous action in the musical transformation of urban spaces. In Chapter 4, through a discussion of *Divorce* I proceed to examine the centrality of the body to music practice and the

affective and sensory impingements of sound. By exploring the functioning of the band and the multi-sensory constellations that their music forged I argue that the nexus between music and the body offers a distinctive lens into the visceral qualities of ethical self-formation. In Chapter 5, I turn to *Cry Parrot* in order to address non-musical processes of ethical self-formation. In shifting my focus from musical to extra-musical activities and from the collective cultivation of ethical dispositions to the ethical becoming of one individual, my aim is to underscore the salience – as well as the inadequacies – of Foucault's ethical apparatus.

Part III consists of Chapter 6 and the Conclusion. In the former, I grapple with a seemingly simple question, namely: 'what is DiY?'. It will become apparent that the complexity of the phenomenon and the multiple and obscured definitions of the term do not allow for definitive answers. This terminological confusion, when projected onto the ethical realm, raises some interesting questions about the temporality and intersubjective nature of ethics, the emergent character of music practice and the production of urban space through music, as well as posing a challenge to established notions of 'agency' and Western 'individualism'. The Conclusion reiterates and builds upon some of these ideas, and I end my ethnography by pondering on whether music can be genuinely 'ethical'.

Part I

Ethnographic Context and Conceptual Background

Chapter 1: Glasgow

1.1 City of Extremes

In her call for an ethnographic approach to the study of popular music, Sara Cohen notes that:

> Ideally, that approach should focus upon social relationships, emphasizing music as social practice and process. It should also be comparative and holistic; historical and dialogical; reflexive and policy-oriented. It should emphasize, among other things, the dynamic complexities of situations within which abstract concepts and models are embedded, and which they often simplify or obscure. The social, cultural and historical specificity of events, activities, relationships and discourses should also be highlighted (1993: 23).

This chapter aims to address several of these characteristics and attempts to embed the subsequent ethnographic description within its social, cultural and historical specificity.[10] In setting the scene for the empirical examination of music practices, I seek to make explicit the historical antecedents and socio-cultural particularities that have influenced and culminated in specific forms of music-making in the city.

In tracing these continuities and disjunctions, I hope to show that Glasgow's social, economic and political history has engendered a pluralism of local experiences and subsequent interpretations of the city. In turn, these lived realities and conflicting representations have been historically embedded within a constant stream of creative practices characterized by varying approaches, but also a shared *êthos*. This leads me to perceive the city as being inextricably linked to music practice, not so much as a symbolic or material context, but as an inherent and often unconscious modality of local music-making. If, as I argue, music-making can be perceived as an ethical practice, then the characteristics of the locality that afford, facilitate or inhibit music-making are integral to my consideration of ethics.

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[10] For a general historical overview of Glasgow, see Berry and Whyte (1987), Daiches (1982), Damer (1990), Gibb (1983), Pacione (1995), Maver (2000) and Reed (1993a). For an overview of historical developments until 1830, see Devine and Jackson (1995); for the period between 1830-1912, see Fraser and Maver (1996); and between 1875-1980, see Checkland (1981).

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, with an estimated population of 598,830 within the city limits,[11] and it is located on the West coast of the country. Glasgow currently relies primarily upon the service sector, but its post-industrial urban landscape still discloses aspects of the city's past. There is a common perception that, compared to Edinburgh, Glasgow's music industry is thriving. The city has been characterized as 'an underground music incubator' and in popular discourse its music scene has been compared to Liverpool in the 1960s and Seattle in the 1990s (Porter 2004). As journalist Barry Nicholson puts it:

> While it may not be pretty, it's nonetheless become the country's de-facto cultural capital, a vibrant mini-metropolis of artists and musicians who live cheaply and party freely. Like pre-Giuliani New York City, it's a place with its own unique culture and character, where almost anything goes (2009: 141).

Within academic quarters, however, these accounts are considered somewhat hyperbolic (Forsyth & Cloonan 2008). Nevertheless, UNESCO recently designated Glasgow as City of Music (2008), with its music scenes generating £75 million a year for the local economy. In 2009, and for the first time outside London, the prestigious MOBO (Music Of Black Origin) awards were held in Glasgow. This city of so many mottos, nominations, titles and awards – such as City of Architecture (1999), European Capital of Sport (2003), host of the Commonwealth Games (2014) and Glasgow with Style (2004), to name but a few (see below for more) – exhibits a poignant history of rapid economic development and subsequent dramatic decline. Until recently, Glasgow had an established reputation as a city of 'razor-gang street violence and urban decay' (Bianchini 1993: 17), while its characterization among sociologists as a 'totem for every kind of modern urban horror' (Berry & Whyte 1987: 1) used to aptly describe a degrading image of the city and the tough living conditions of its dwellers.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Glasgow stood as a mercantile and industrial centre of global calibre. This certainly did not anticipate the downward economic spiral and violent industrial decline that would mark its trajectory into the

[11] According to the 2011 Census.

twentieth century, when urban malaise came to be closely associated with the city. In order to dispel its negative image, over the past few decades local authorities have embarked on a project involving aggressive city marketing and PR campaigns in their effort to convince the world at large – but also Glaswegians themselves – that Glasgow has now become an attractive tourist destination and a cultural metropolis that boasts an enviable retail sector.

This re-invention of Glasgow through image-making might not be revealing of the whole truth about the city's character. Nevertheless, municipal authorities have managed to develop its service-based economy and regenerate large parts of the city considerably. As such, Glasgow is in a constant state of flux and has emerged as a city of extremes, with its urban landscape dominated by regenerated areas alongside monolithic concrete housing estates. The social effects of such discrepancies are reflected by its urban fabric, which attests to the uneasy coexistence of severely deprived parts of the population and affluent city elites. These dissonances have been the outcomes of a series of overlapping historical, political and economic processes rather than isolated or recent policies and events. Therefore, the examination of the circumstances that have culminated in Glasgow's contemporary state should take into account the historical, political and economic factors that have forged its distinctive identity.

In what follows, I will outline several events and processes that have variably defined and contributed to the city's current condition. In doing so, my aim is to tease out specific characteristics that will help me discern a particular local approach to music-making. The city's rich and complex history precludes the elaboration of definitive statements regarding its identity, which has been and remains plural. However, there are tangible examples, as well as forms of local knowledge, that underscore this identity. This justifies a historical overview for the purpose of capturing the elements that will make understandable what follows in Part II.

1.2 Historical Background

1.2.1 Origins, Settlement and Expansion

Precise historical data is lacking with regards to the city's origin as a settlement. Archaeological findings place it firmly within the period of the Roman Empire but signs of temporary occupation exist since prehistoric times (Gibb 1983: 4). According to Maver (2000: 6), the city's authenticated history does not begin prior to the twelfth century. Glasgow's ecclesiastical connections elevated its prestige in the region (Durkan 1998; Macquarrie 1997), while it was only in 1611 that it achieved official recognition as a royal burgh, with a population of 7,000.

Over the course of the seventeenth century its population doubled, undoubtedly due to Glasgow's commercial expansion, which involved the consolidation of the city's trading connections with England and Ireland, as well as continental territories (Smout 1960, 1968). Nevertheless, it was the eighteenth century that marked Glasgow's rise to prominence, bolstered by the transatlantic tobacco and West India sugar trade (Devine 1978, 1990a). By the end of the century Glasgow's population had increased to 66,000, one of the most accelerated urban growth rates in the country (Maver 2000: 28).

In the nineteenth century Glasgow entered a phase of unprecedented development and expansion. The established commercial relations with colonial territories were complemented by a boom in the local textile industry (Fraser 1976; Murray 1978), the extraction of coal and iron from areas in close proximity to the city (Slaven 1975), the development of railways (Kellett 1964, 1979; Nicholson & O'Neill 1987), and the emergence of financial institutions (Checkland 1975). The city's industrialization played a crucial role in this process and the deepening of the Clyde allowed larger ships to gain direct access to Glasgow (Riddell 1979).

Even more than in the previous centuries, the River Clyde, the most distinctive topographic feature of Glasgow, was bound to seal the city's fate. In the decades preceding the end of World War I the shipbuilding industry became inextricably linked with the city and its surrounding areas, particularly Govan and Partick, which served as the bases for several shipbuilding firms (Carvel 1950; Hume & Moss 1975, 1979; Moss & Hume 1977). Glasgow's territorial expansion in early twentieth century, which incorporated the aforementioned areas, resulted in the city boasting a population of over a million (Withers 1996: 142). From this, only a small percentage was due to immigration from the continent but, as a result of the potato famine in Ireland, Irish presence in the city was already established since the previous century (Devine 1990b; Mitchell 1998).

The population influx over the course of the city's history had a tremendous impact on the urban fabric (Pacione 1995; Reed 1993a). The property development of the late eighteenth century reflected an attempt by the mercantile elites to move out of the increasingly disintegrating inner city (Walker 1993). This culminated in the subsequent suburbanization of Glasgow by the middle classes (Atherton 1991; Simpson 1977) and, ultimately, to slum clearances and the relocation of large segments of the workforce during the nineteenth (Edwards 1993) and twentieth centuries (Markus 1993; see also Glendinning 1997).

The pressures caused by overcrowding have historically resulted in anarchic construction and, in most cases, piecemeal attempts by local authorities to deal with the phenomenon with demolition and redevelopment rather than consolidation (see below). As Reed points out, Glasgow is a place of architectural 'disjunctions rather than conjunctions' (1993b: 2), despite the fact that two centuries ago the city was envied for its urban outlook (Maver 2000: 25-26). The contradictions of Glasgow's contemporary built environment and its fragmented urban landscape stand as (literally) concrete manifestations and reminders of the acute economic and social inequalities that have accompanied the city's rise to prominence.

1.2.2 Economy and Politics

Although Glasgow's economic output has risen in the first decade of the millennium, during the time of my fieldwork the city was experiencing a steady increase in unemployment. Large parts of the population were living in deprivation, though relevant figures had fallen.[12] Nowadays Glasgow relies mainly on the service sector, with its industrial base making only a minor contribution to the local economy. However, the heavy industrialization of the city was precisely what has historically influenced Glasgow's economic fortunes.

When tobacco monopolies broke due to the American Revolution (Devine 1973), the city's commercial expansion and diversification, as well as investments in land and industry ensured continuous economic growth. For example, the local textile production, particularly linen, greatly benefited the local economy. The economic success of textile-making notwithstanding, by the 1830s both handloom weaving and cotton factories were in decline, not least due to the intensification of competition in the industry, with English companies eventually overtaking Scottish ones. Increasingly, textiles became less important for the city's economic growth, but a large part of its population was still employed in the industry throughout the century (Robertson 1970).

According to Berry and Whyte (1987: 2), the turning point in Glasgow's history was the discovery of large supplies of coal and ironstone in nearby locations towards the end of the eighteenth century. The abundant iron and coal supplies were crucial for the rapid development of Clyde shipbuilding over the period 1860-1918. Other related industries also contributed to the city's economic development, such as steel (Payne 1979), which eventually displaced iron, supplies of which were drying up by the 1890s. The figures associated with shipbuilding in Glasgow during this period are astonishing: Clyde

[12] According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2012), unemployment rates have risen from 17,5 percent of the working age population in 2009 to 19,1 percent in 2012, while Glasgow's national share in the 5 percent of the most deprived areas for the same period has fallen from 48,6 percent to 45,5 percent.

shipyards produced 70 percent of the total iron tonnage in Britain during the 1850s and 1860s, and in 1913 nearly one fifth of the tonnage produced globally. Overall, the city's shipbuilding output between 1870-1914 consisted of one third of the total British output (Booth & Boyle 1993: 24; Maver 2000: 116). Shipbuilding for military purposes also constituted a sustained source of wealth and employment, and ensured that even during wartime the shipyards remained active (Scott & Cunnison 1924). Thus, it is after the end of World War I that the city's dramatic industrial decline took place. Before then, Glasgow's prominent position as a globally important industrial centre had conferred the designation of 'Second City of the Empire' (Oakley 1946).

Significantly, the shipbuilding industry left its mark on Glasgow and 'created an enduring identity that blended masculine skill, cosmopolitanism and entrepreneurial flair' (Maver 2000: 113). Clyde shipbuilding and the River itself became potent metaphors for Glasgow's commercial expansionism, civic pride and competitive achievement. Such an image was not singular though, and this was evident in other city titles, such as 'Venice of the North', which highlighted its mercantile profile, or in the promotion of the city by local authorities as a self-sufficient city-state that cared for its citizens (ibid.: 124-125). But neither the economic momentum nor the prestigious labels of the city could mask the appalling living conditions for a large segment of the population.

The residential polarization and the deterioration of the city's urban fabric was encapsulated by the tenement (Wordsall 1979), which from the mid-nineteenth century dominated Glasgow's urban landscape. According to Reed, it was the construction of tenements that engendered the city's characteristic architectural outlook, underpinned by singular homogeneity (1993c: 104). Ironically, tenement building formed part of an inner city improvement plan that aimed to meet insatiable housing demand and counteract the rapid decline of the old town and the proliferation of slums. Usually a four-storey poor quality building, the tenement provided inexpensive housing for a fast growing urban population. The tenement became the definitive characteristic of the

city's image but the issues of congestion and overcrowding, which improvement plans in the latter half of the nineteenth century sought to rectify, reemerged in the new tenements that subsequently declined into slums. A second slum clearance was thus in order after the Second World War.

As a symbol of social deprivation brought about by industrial decline, the tenement was at the centre of demolition and urban restructuring plans. Nevertheless, as Booth and Boyle remark (1993: 25), much like the Clyde shipyards, which had become inextricably linked with the city's fate, the tenement became the object of urban mythology, as well as a symbol of community and sharing among the city's working-class inhabitants. The fond memories of the tenement (Faley 1990) obscure the hardship of its residents that was so characteristic of the period, but they also attest to a rich legacy of local ideas about urban living that derive from the city's history.

The shipbuilding industry and the attendant developments in the city gave rise to particular images of Glasgow, but they also decisively influenced the politics of the period, which resulted in the emergence of Glasgow's reputation for political radicalism and left-wing activism. Of course, social and political upheavals were not uncommon throughout the history of the area. The city has been the site of several socio-political struggles, among which the notorious rent strikes (Melling 1983), reflecting the inequalities embedded in the unequal distribution of wealth. Glasgow exhibits a political identity which has been intimately connected with its economy and inter-class tensions (see Cage 1987; Duncan & McIvor 1992; Fraser 1988; Gordon 1991).

Although the appeal of socialism in the city was initially weak, Glasgow subsequently became strongly identified with 'municipal socialism' during the late 1880s (Fraser 1990, 1993). The Labour Party's rise to power came during the pivotal year of 1922 and remained so for the best part of the twentieth century. Post-electoral reforms and the expansion of the city's boundaries, which now included working-class areas previously

outside its jurisdiction, contributed to the success of the phenomenon known as 'Red Clydeside' (MacLean 1983).

The notion of Red Clydeside had its roots in various precedents (Kenefick & McIvor 1996; Knox 1989), such as the anti-war movement, the rent strikes, the Singer strike of 1911, as well as the engineering workers' strike in 1919, which culminated in violence and echoed the revolutionary sentiments of the period (Boyle & Hughes 1994: 455; Maver 2000: 229-230). The industrial militancy and political radicalism of this period represent an important part of the labour movement's history and left an enduring mark on public consciousness and local politics by securing Glasgow's image as a workers' city. The insurgency of the working classes belongs to a tradition of political protest and activism that came to be closely associated with Glasgow. This had a continuous presence throughout the century, particularly as Glasgow entered a period of severe economic decline after 1918.

1.3 Industrial Decline and Urban Regeneration

1.3.1 Cancer of Empire

For all the anti-war sentiments within the labour movement, the city's industries managed to sustain production during the war due to the increased output of warships and munitions. After the end of the conflict, however, Glasgow began to feel the consequences of recession, which hit its industrial base hard. The war had restructured the global economic map, and competition from Japan and the United States dramatically diminished Glasgow's shipbuilding output (McGoldrick 1982). Exports plunged, the coal and steel industries were affected severely and unemployment levels rose sharply, reaching 30 percent in 1930 (Booth & Boyle 1993: 25).

It is not surprising, then, that within a few years Glasgow had gone from 'Second City of the Empire' to 'Cancer of Empire' (Bolitho 1924). Interwar economic fluctuations

exposed Glasgow's over-reliance on specific industries and the situation was further affected by the lack of industrial expansion and diversification. Protectionism and monopolization had emerged in order to offset the crisis, but eventually backfired and the industry continued its downward spiral. According to Booth and Boyle (1993: 26), union militancy and defensiveness had become associated with the city's industry, while employers had an equal share of responsibility due to their outdated management practices.

The global recession of the 1930s inflicted another blow on Glasgow's weakened shipyards, and by 1933 production reached its nadir (Maver 2000: 207). Although interventions by the state and local authorities sought to reverse this uncertain climate, Glasgow entered the Second World War devoid of its previous image and glory. Again, military production temporarily revived the economy and the aftermath of the war found the city in a more affluent state than during the pre-war recession. However, local industries were in terminal decline as the long-term issues of an aging infrastructure and dated production methods had not been tackled effectively. Consequently, the following decades saw further contraction of the industry and in the 1971-1983 period Glasgow lost 45 percent of its manufacturing workforce (Booth & Boyle 1993: 26).

1.3.2 Urban Regeneration and Economic Reorientation

In the meantime, the deterioration of the urban environment had become a symbol of industrial decline. Social problems as the by-products of economic recession were increasingly visible and large parts of the city were descending into slums. Anti-social behaviour and the long-standing problem of housing were pressing issues, while specific areas of the city, such as the notorious Gorbals in the south, became synonymous with urban degradation in the United Kingdom (Maver 2000: 252-255). The second half of the century found Glasgow derelict and the transition in the 1920s and 1930s from the old to the modern Glasgow and, later on, from the industrial to the post-industrial city was the product of several decades of reconstruction and

redevelopment (Reed 1993b: 4). The severe economic problems of the period and their impact upon the city's decaying architecture certainly did not anticipate Glasgow's subsequent reputation as a model for urban regeneration (see Boyle 1990; Keating 1988; Keating & Boyle 1986; Lever & Moor 1996).

Interwar urban planning strategies (McKean 1987), as well as the more comprehensive reconstruction policies from the 1950s onwards, were initiated in order to deal with the acute housing problem. A combined strategy was implemented which included slum demolition, rebuilding and the construction of high-density, multi-storey buildings, which represented the great majority of the completed buildings during this period (Horsey 1990: 49; see also Glendinning & Muthesius 1994). The relocation of families from the old tenements to newly-built residencies was complemented by an 'overspill' policy that resulted in several thousand city dwellers leaving Glasgow for neighbouring towns. These combined policies proved fruitful and within thirty years the city's population fell from 1.1 million in 1951 to 765,000 in 1981 (Maver 2000: 264).

However, due to the adverse economic circumstances that continued to impinge upon the city, reconstruction policies did not always live up to the expectations of the migrating populations. Relocation meant that communities were fragmented, while the remoteness of several high-rise flats and the failure to equip them with adequate amenity resources sharpened the image of a city divided between disadvantaged working-class areas and middle-class suburbs. Booth and Boyle contend that the reconstruction plans put forward in the 1950s and 1960s were 'quantitative rather than qualitative, physical rather than social, utilitarian rather than enriching' (1993: 28). The problems created by the alienating qualities of these new housing forms led to a shift in strategy towards inner city regeneration from the 1970s, while the conservation movement gradually revealed the city's rich architectural heritage, until then obscured by layers of industrial grime (Martin 1993).

The rediscovery of inner city areas and their conservation led to the revitalization of disused buildings and warehouses (Donnison & Middleton 1987). The resulting 'Merchant City' echoed Glasgow's re-invention as a commercial and leisure centre. The fact that the Glasgow District Council owned much of the area played a decisive role in its control of development, while the housing association movement and the Scottish Development Agency were crucial for the shift of attention towards the regeneration of the city centre and the materialization of relevant projects. However, the effects of deindustrialization were not tackled by these processes of development and gentrification (Macinnes 1995), something which further enhanced the division of the city in two extremes. Moreover, additional criticisms emerged with regards to Glasgow's urban regeneration and the way in which '"Red Clydeside" had apparently yielded to Thatcherite market economics, in a city with an entrenched Labour power base' (Maver 2000: 282).[13]

The civic celebration of 'Glasgow 800' (Cochrane 1975), launched to commemorate the granting of the burgh charter in 1175, was both a nod to historical continuity and part of a forward-looking attitude (Maver 2000: 216). By the early 1960s, as well as during the interwar period, a service-based economy was on the rise. The growth of the service sector continued throughout the decades that followed, although unemployment figures show considerable job losses during the 1980s (Booth & Boyle 1993: 27). Notably, employment in the arts exceeded employment in the shipyards during the same period (Myerscough 1988). The pursuit of a new economic base focused upon business services, while tourism, which accompanied Glasgow's makeover, contributed to the gradual reversal of the city's image.

Undoubtedly, the hugely successful 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign (Struthers 1986) played an important role. The marketing of the city began in 1983 with the launch of the campaign, which sought to demonstrate to the world that Glasgow was becoming

[13] For criticisms on these and more recent local regeneration policies see below and also Friend of Zanetti (2006), Gray (2008, 2009) and Nesbitt (2008).

‘an innovative city’ with a ‘can-do’ attitude (MacDonald 2002: 51). The apparent optimism in the slogan endeavoured to enhance civic pride for past achievements and helped to dispel Glasgow’s negative image. There was something profoundly ironic in the ‘Glasgow’s Miles Better’ campaign, considering the long-term economic decline and urban malaise that characterized the city for the best part of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it was precisely this new image, sharply contrasting with Glasgow’s past, that local authorities sought to promote in order to highlight the city’s renaissance (Maver 2000: 281).

The perennial problem of unemployment was still present and the negative connotations associated with Glasgow were not easily suppressed in the public consciousness. For all this, ‘Glasgow’s Miles Better’ was not solely civic hype. Crucially, it involved a sense of pride for the city’s cultural and artistic heritage and reflected the blossoming of cultural activity in the city (Booth & Boyle 1993: 31). Glasgow’s regeneration initiatives, and specifically the ‘Glasgow’s Miles Better’ campaign, highlight the multiple identities of the city and the conflicting representations encountered by outsiders (Charsley 1986). These expose the widely disparate everyday experiences of different parts of the population and create a kaleidoscopic sense of community in the city. These images are equally real and range from ‘working-class Glasgow’ to ‘culturally vibrant metropolis’.

1.3.3 European City of Culture 1990

The launch of the ‘Glasgow’s Miles Better’ campaign was predicated upon the view that the negative image of the city inhibited inward investment and therefore presented obstacles to the process of regeneration. Thus, the marketing of the city through a reconstruction of its image aimed to have an immediate and short-term effect that would yield much needed long-term economic benefits (Paddison 1993: 346-347). If ‘Glasgow’s Miles Better’ represented the first step towards recasting the city’s image, then the title of ‘European Cultural Capital’ was the culmination of this process and an

exposition of Glasgow's cultural achievements (Booth & Boyle 1993: 32; Boyle & Hughes 1991: 220). Glasgow's designation revealed the powerful ways in which city marketing based upon culture and the arts was perceived to have an effect upon economic regeneration.[14] While previous title-holders such as Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris had established reputations for their cultural heritages, in Glasgow the title was employed to *confer* a similar status. It was a *tool* for regeneration (García 2005: 843). The strong economic rationale behind this image-making was aimed at attracting tourism as well as making the city a more appealing place for living and working (Mooney 2004: 329).

During the 1980s, the opening of various galleries, exhibition spaces, cultural and arts institutions, the launch in 1982 of Mayfest, a month long arts festival, and the hosting of the International Garden Festival in 1988, facilitated Glasgow's strategy. The city's successful bid resulted in a year-long celebration of 'culture' in 1990, during which 3,500 events were presented (Myerscough 1991). In comparing the income generated with an estimated expenditure of £53.5m, the municipal authorities' aim to attract cultural tourism initially seemed to be successful (Booth & Boyle 1993: 36). In addition to the immediate economic benefits, the city now had a good reputation among visitors and inhabitants alike (Mooney 2004: 329).

Although a large proportion of tourists held positive views about Glasgow, the 1990 event did little to influence public opinion beyond that or increase the fairly low number of those positively inclined to relocate to Glasgow (Paddison 1993: 347). Furthermore, there is little evidence indicating that 1990 directly contributed to the local economy, much less in the long-term. In fact, its economic benefits have been questioned and it has become apparent that the rhetoric of economic development adopted by local authorities was translated into low-paid, short-term jobs (García 2005: 861; see also Gómez 1998). In citing relevant figures, Mooney argues that renewal strategies have

[14] The shift to 'culture' has been part of a broader global urban narrative. See, for example, Bianchini and Parkinson (1993), Smith (1996) and Zukin (1982, 1995). For popular music's role in processes of urban change and local economic development, see Cohen (2007).

actually contributed to the *worsening* of deprivation and poverty in the city by securing low-wage jobs for large segments of the population, thus limiting their prospects (2004: 333-337). Whereas the effects of the 1990 event appeared not to have made a positive impact on the city's economy, the cultural discourse associated with it presents its most sustained legacy (García 2005). But celebrating culture necessitates a definition of what 'culture' *is*.[15]

In the case of Glasgow 1990, local authorities adopted an all-encompassing definition ranging from lifestyle and sport to food, science and the arts (Booth & Boyle 1993: 35-36). It is precisely a utilitarian adoption of culture that fueled reactions against the event, notably from Workers City, a group of left-wing activists consisting of local artists, celebrities and other public figures (Booth & Boyle 1993; Boyle & Hughes 1991, 1994; Mooney 2004). The access of the group to local, national and international media secured considerable exposure for Workers City's criticisms, which were compiled in two essay collections (McLay 1988, 1990). Their critical opposition can be summarized as follows:

> [A] concern to stress that the event has more to do with the interests of capital and politics than culture; that in a bid to re-present Glasgow in a positive light the reality of working class life and the richness of its cultural heritage are being systematically ignored and thrashed; that the event itself will bring no economic comfort for the average Glaswegian; and that the event is confirmation of the willingness of the labour GDC [Glasgow District Council] to form partnerships with the capitalist system, which is to be regarded as an illegitimate sell out (Boyle & Hughes 1991: 224).

Workers City cannot be said to have voiced the concerns of the wider Glasgow population but the group did stand as the most outspoken critic of the event (ibid. 1994: 465). At the heart of the debate was the historically fragmented image of the city, torn between a deprived working-class population and urban elites. The politicized nature of the opposition characterized the conflict over the representation of local identity and its

[15] It is worth noting that, in official terms, the 'Scottish' part of 'culture' is left to Edinburgh. Both Edinburgh and Glasgow are renowned for promoting 'culture', albeit very different types. For a parallel portrait of both cities, see Crawford (2013).

'realness'. Workers City argued that official discourses surrounding the event by and large excluded the working classes. Their own conviction was predicated upon the need to re-work the past and employ a concept of culture that would be readily translatable to Glaswegians, by enabling them to work through their everyday problems. As Paddison notes, 'recasting a post-industrial image for a city such as Glasgow needs to come to terms with its previous existence as an industrial city' (1993: 348). Damer, a local academic associated with the group, contends that 'Glasgow's problem is that it is a workers' city whose rulers resolutely pretend that it is something else' (1990: 210).

Whatever the veracity and limitations of the claims made by Workers City might be (Booth & Boyle 1993: 39; Mooney 2004: 333), we have seen that the fractured sense of the city's identity has been part and parcel with its history, and still continues to resonate with the reality of contemporary urban living. Thus, the different representations of the city's identity had the political effect of favouring different parts of the population (Boyle & Hughes 1991: 227).

If Glasgow 1990 represents a failure to come to terms with and resolve the city's social problems, it is important to note that the debate was framed in relation to contrasting representations and *not* material concerns. It was the adoption of a specific definition of culture and the meaning of local identity that provoked a political response, rather than a conflict regarding the economic matters pertaining to the event. The symbolic reorientation of the city by its leaders cannot be underestimated, as it betrayed a shift in what the new Glasgow stood for, namely a city ready to collaborate with capital by displacing and marginalizing long-standing cultural traditions (Boyle & Hughes 1994: 468).[16]

This also highlighted the inadequacy of a cultural policy exclusively based upon economic criteria and called attention to the risk of conflating economic benefits with

[16] For relevant economic policies and the complex relationship between public and private sectors in the decade preceding and culminating in Glasgow 1990, see Boyle (1993). For the effects of regionalism in Glasgow's economic development since the 1970s, see Kantor (2000).

cultural ideas. On the one hand, the cultural legacy of the 1990 event cannot be measured with economic figures, and on the other hand, the adoption of a business approach to cultural matters may displace 'culture' from its supposedly central position in culture-led regeneration. The event's aftermath stresses the need to embed 'culture' within the dynamics of the different communities comprising the city and not in fabricated images or urban spectacles (Booth & Boyle 1993: 43, 46; García 2005: 862-863). In other words, if, instead of catering for the enrichment of the city's artistic and cultural life, the aim is purely economic development, then 'culture' can easily be replaced by anything marketable that could yield income. And in the case of Glasgow, even this has proven to be a short-term strategy. As García demonstrates (2005: 860-861), the vibrancy of Glasgow's creative cultures long preceded the 1990 events, and in the years following the city's designation as European Cultural Capital this vibrancy was sustained primarily due to the strong informal artistic networks operating in the city.

1.4 Cultural Production

It is within these historical, socioeconomic and political circumstances that cultural production was nurtured in the city in the latter half of the twentieth century. Various forms of entertainment and artistic production had preceded these more recent developments. Nevertheless, it is mainly since the 1970s that Glasgow's artists and musicians, as well as the city's architectural heritage, gained international recognition. During the same period, the informal networks supporting this ongoing activity expanded and consolidated their presence in the cultural and social life of the city.

Although Glasgow is considered to be '*the* industrial, working-class city *par excellence*' (Damer 1990: 209), it was the increasing confidence of the industrial and commercial middle classes that was reflected in the introduction of new forms of recreation (Maver 2000: 100-109). Glasgow had turned to Haussmann's Paris for the mid-nineteenth century regeneration programmes (Edwards 1993: 88-89), and now

looked once again to European metropolitan centres, particularly London, for such cultural impulses. As early as 1782, the first Theatre Royal opened in Glasgow, following tensions that had arisen from the need to establish appropriate forms of entertainment for the rapidly increasing population.

After the turn of the century, the construction of several other theatres and playhouses followed, while the monumental Anderson's City Theatre, with a capacity of 5,000, was built in 1845. It was not only theatre that captured the interest of Glaswegians, however. Musical activities were also quite popular during this period. Encouraged by the rise of evangelicalism and the temperance movement (King 1979), people attended or took part in choral music concerts, due to their perceived elevating qualities. These ensembles could not meet increasing demand, and the need to stage larger performances led to the construction of the Glasgow City Hall and the Queen's Rooms in 1841 and 1857 respectively.

In their interesting historical anthology of first hand observations about everyday life in Glasgow, Berry and Whyte write about the passion of Glaswegians for concerts and recitals that resulted in regularly packing the City Hall, and which established Glasgow's reputation as a music loving city (1987: 79-81). The establishment of McLellan Galleries, the first municipal gallery in Britain, took place in 1856, and in 1898 the People's Palace Museum was opened in Glasgow Green. The 'Second City's' Art Gallery in Kelvingrove Park opened its doors to the audience for the International Exhibition in 1901, around the time when the Glasgow School of Art was established in the city, housed in a building designed by former student Charles Rennie Mackintosh (Kaplan 1996). In the meantime, the 'Glasgow Boys', a collective of local painters, had already acquired fame both at home and abroad since the 1880s (Billcliffe 1985).

The first chain of cinemas, named 'Picturedromes', was already operating in the city by 1911. During wartime, cinemas and music halls had gained wider popularity over other forms of entertainment (Maver 2000: 195; see also Peter 1996). More than sixteen

theatres were built before the First World War and over a hundred cinemas were in business by the 1930s. However, it was dancing and the culture of the ballrooms that made a distinctive contribution to the city's vibrancy before and during the mid-century (Casciani 1994). By the 1920s, Glasgow had eleven ballrooms and seventy smaller dance halls, more than anywhere else in Britain. The Barrowlands ballroom, which opened in 1934 in the East End of the city, burned down in 1958 and was re-erected in 1960, is currently used for live music concerts, but stands as a reminder of that era. Although ballroom dancing was highly popular, it was not the only form of dancing available in the city during this period (see Frith *et al* 2013), while the subsequent proliferation of new musical trends resulted in ballroom dancing fading out by the 1970s.[17]

Towards the end of the century, the rediscovery of Mackintosh's architectural heritage strengthened the conservation movement and became a prime tourist attraction, thus bringing into focus the city's architectural legacy, including the work of Alexander 'Greek' Thomson (McFadzean 1979; Stamp & McKinstry 1994), among others. Civic leaders and local elites continued to boast the city's international profile and Glasgow at the turn of the millennium enjoyed an established reputation as a cultural centre. The art gallery that houses the internationally renowned Burrell Collection was opened in 1983 (Marks 1983), the Centre of Contemporary Arts which succeeded the Third Eye centre was established in 1992 and the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMa) in 1996.

A host of local writers emerged during the 1980s and 1990s (Burgess 1998), with James Kelman winning the Booker Prize for fiction in 1994. Today, Glasgow is home to the Scottish Opera, the Scottish Ballet, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra, the Citizen's Theatre and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Combined with an array of other performing arts

[17] Another historical music venue was the Glasgow Apollo on Renfield Street. It operated between 1973 and 1985, and was demolished in 1987 (Leadbetter 1995). Perhaps the most well-known contemporary venue in Glasgow is King Tuts Wah Wah Hut. The hugely successful Mancunian band *Oasis* were signed to *Creation Records* (a now defunct London-based record label) after performing there live in 1993.

organizations and institutions, as well as a substantial number of live performance venues, theatres, galleries and exhibition spaces, the strong presence of music and arts in the city is indisputable.

Though the city's cultural heritage largely maps onto the social, economic and spatial divisions that characterized its urban history, the undocumented activities of individuals and groups from varying backgrounds engaging in local cultural production cannot be neatly separated from established or high-profile institutions. The grassroots artist and musician-led projects, spaces and events have formed the bedrock of the city's art and music scenes and have fueled a continuous activity that cemented Glasgow's reputation as a culturally vibrant place. However, and this is a conviction that runs through this thesis, it is the plural relationship, interpenetration, continuity and overlap between grassroots practices and the more established art and music worlds that foster Glasgow's distinctive cultural outlook. This relationship has not always been positive, but it is precisely issues of exclusion that have sparked cultural countercurrents, as I shall demonstrate.

Lowndes (2010) provides a social history of such grassroots practices in an effort to redress the balance between the critical attention given to established local artists and the lack of commentary on the emergence and work of several prolific artists and musicians that have operated in the city over the past few decades.[18] As already pointed out, such a distinction is quite ambiguous, as a number of local artists and musicians have made the transition from obscurity to fame precisely through their engagement in, and dedication to, the local grassroots networks. The general transition of the Glasgow arts scene from 'emergent' in the 1980s to 'established' in the 2000s, is reflected in the recent success of several local artists and musicians (ibid.: 10). For example, Glasgow-born, Glasgow-educated or Glasgow-based artists have won or have been nominated for

[18] See also Brandtzæg (1997), Birrell and Finlay (2002) and Fields (2009).

the Turner Prize,[19] while a constant stream of nationally or internationally successful bands have emerged since the mid-1990s.[20]

Lowndes's account traces the history and work of local poets, playwrights and literary figures, such as Edwin Morgan, Alexander Trocchi and John McGrath, as well as a series of artists, many of whom were associated with the Glasgow School of Art (GSA). Lowndes also describes the proliferation of music venues, artist-led spaces, studios and galleries, such as Transmission; the advent and local appropriations of different music genres, for example northern soul, punk and post-punk, as well as dance music and some of its exponents, such as *Optimo*;[21] and finally, the emergence of *Variant* and other grassroots publications.

This is not an exhaustive list and it would be impossible to chart the different circumstances and the important role of a large number of individuals and groups that gave rise to this wealth of cultural activity. However, it is possible to discern some general characteristics that have left a sustained legacy and engendered an *êthos* of grassroots art and music practice. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the second edition of Lowndes's out-of-print book, which became available half-way through my fieldwork, included a new chapter (under a section titled 'New Directions') that briefly mentioned all three music actors included in this thesis (Lowndes 2010: 406-407).

Without a doubt, the success of specific artists and musicians in the locality has functioned as a catalyst for the recruitment of individuals in music and the arts. Moreover, I was struck by the continuous presence of highly-regarded local artists and musicians at the small-scale gigs I attended. Even more striking was not only their

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[19] Winners of the Turner Prize from Glasgow include Douglas Gordon (1996), Simon Starling (2005), Richard Wright (2009), Susan Phillipsz (2010) and Martin Boyce (2011).

[20] *The Yummy Fur*, *Belle and Sebastian*, *The Delgados*, *Mogwai* and *Arab Strap*, among others. More recently *Camera Obscura*, *Travis*, *Glasvegas* and *Franz Ferdinand*, two members of which had joined *The Yummy Fur* before disbanding in 1999.

[21] *Optimo* club nights represented something of a cultural institution in Glasgow, while one of their members had been instrumental in the development of the Edinburgh club scene during the 1990s.

presence and interaction with other musicians and audience members, but their *contributions* to these events. For example, it was not difficult to come across somebody giving a hand at the door or DJing at these events.[22] I was indeed surprised and intrigued by the fact that successful and relatively affluent cultural producers would nevertheless continue to reside in Glasgow and not relocate to cities such as London.

These contributions extended beyond hands-on support. Notably, facilitating and supporting the cultivation of local talent pervaded the attitude of many of the more established figures. The band *Mogwai*, for example, had built their own studio locally and had launched their own label (*Rock Action*). The label had signed *Remember Remember* and *Errors*, among others. One of their members' ex-wife, Eileen, who ran *Synergy Concerts*, regularly hosted bands from the DiY cohort. Then, *Optimo* released *Divorce*'s first single (Chapter 4), while Gerard (see below and Chapters 3 & 6), who along with his band *El Hombre Trajeado* was an important actor in the mid-1990s pinnacle of the local independent music scene, retained strong ties with the local DiY network. This efflorescence, concurrent with the advent of 'post-rock', revolved mainly around the success of *Chemikal* [*sic*] *Underground* record label, which is owned by *The Delgados* and has released music from *Bis*, *Mogwai* and *Arab Strap,* among others.

Gerard, who was a close friend of members of *Franz Ferdinand* – perhaps the best known band to emerge from Glasgow in the last decade – had explained to me that during their early years their singer was a core and dedicated member of the DiY network. *Franz Ferdinand* famously played their initial gigs in the 'Chateau', a dilapidated warehouse in the Gorbals that was transformed into an unlicensed, self-run gallery and music venue. After being raided by the police, the Chateau was moved to a disused Victorian courtroom and jailhouse in the East End. The Chateau later became an artists' collective but its initial use also provided inspiration for the launch of similar

[22] I met Richard Wright at one event, I have seen David Shrigley – a local artist nominated for the 2013 Turner Prize – attending and DJing at *Cry Parrot* events (Chapter 5), while members of *Mogwai*, *Arab Strap* and other bands have had a regular presence in small-scale events.

projects, such as the more business-oriented Studio Warehouse Glasgow (SWG3), a music and art studios complex (Lowndes 2010: 379-380; see also Chapter 5).

These multi-layered and diversified activities are indicative of the cross-pollination between music and the arts locally. Many of my informants were artists themselves (Chapter 4), appreciated the contribution of the arts to the city and to the development of a DiY *êthos* (Chapter 3), or sought to implant an artistic dimension to music events (Chapter 5). Such a crossover is painstakingly documented by Lowndes, who identifies, following LeWitt (1969), an 'idea chain' as one of the main characteristics of the ways in which grassroots music and art have operated in the city (2010: 419). As products of creative labour, many of these events lacked a commodity value, and their actual value existed in their capacity to inspire others to take up similar projects. While grassroots practices did not fit a specific model or blueprint, their legacy of a DiY *êthos* and their influence on subsequent generations of artists and musicians have been profound. With regards to music specifically, there have been various examples of local bands, music collectives and record labels whose character resembled, was echoed in, or at least had implicitly influenced the nature of my informants' practices. These precursors stretch back to the 1970s.[23]

Although atypical, one such example was the short-lived but well-known *Postcard Records* founded by Alan Horne in 1979 (Reynolds 2005: 343-360). Despite its moderate independent success, *Postcard* was nevertheless a grassroots operation and the outlet for local and Edinburgh bands.[24] Its melodic musical inclinations and the associated bands' playful and innocent outlook went on to influence a generation of musicians in the city and beyond. The informal organization of the label and its musical

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[23] Some notable bands from Glasgow or nearby towns in that period include *The Sensational Alex Harvey Band*, *Deacon Blue*, *Del Amitri*, *Simple Minds*, *Teenage Fanclub*, *Jesus and Mary Chain*, *The Vaselines* and *Primal Scream.*

[24] For example, *Orange Juice*, *Josef K* and *Aztec Camera*, were all signed to *Postcard.* Along with the NME C86 cassette-tape compilation, they played a decisive role in the emergence of indie-pop. The C86 compilation featured several Scottish bands, among whom *The Pastels*, whose guitarist and vocalist currently co-runs the independent record shop Monorail.

reaction to the period's dominant sounds provided a set of characteristics evident in subsequent local record labels.[25]

The emergence of the *Glasgow Music Collective* (GMC) in 1991 marked another important moment in Glasgow's 'Do-it-Yourself' music history. GMC organized regular gigs for local and touring bands and their aim was to retain control of their own entertainment, by operating outside of what they perceived as the 'corrupt' music industry (Lowndes 2010: 160). They saw their *modus operandi* as having a political aspect, and according to Gerard – one of the collective's founding members – GMC would run parallel to several local bands, such as *Dawson* and *Dog Faced Hermans*. The collective regularly utilized 13th Note for shows.[26] They disbanded in a sad manner in 2002 (ibid.: 346).

Alongside GMC and these bands, which also included *The Mackenzies*, *Whirling Pig Dervish*, *Badgewearer* and *Archbishop Kebab*, a local band called *Stretchheads* were active in the city between 1987 and 1992 (Robb 2009: 285-292). Their name was repeatedly mentioned by my informants as one of the bands that had made an impact on them. Its short lifespan included the release of two albums and various singles. The band initially promoted their own shows and according to their singer: 'We definitely didn't have ideas of being on a major. Doing independent music and playing with bands that we liked or inspired us was all we wanted' (ibid.: 291). Members of *Stretchheads*, as well as the aforementioned bands, are now involved in other musical projects and have fostered links with younger local musicians.

The demise of GMC and the absence of similar endeavours were felt locally and ultimately gave rise to *Nuts and Seeds* (NaS), a DiY music collective, partially

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[25] In reaction to rock machismo and punk's angst, sensitivity became subversive, according to Reynolds (2005: 344). Ironically, it was precisely this mellow sound aesthetic that *Divorce* sought to oppose (Introduction).

[26] Between 1992-1998 the venue was situated on Glassford Street, before relocating to King Street. For the history of the 13th Note, see Lowndes (2010).

consisting of several GSA graduates (Lowndes 2010: 400-403). NaS started in 2002 and continued from where GMC had left off. However, they too ceased activities shortly after I began my fieldwork because some of its core members had decided to move away from Glasgow. Nonetheless, the seed had already been planted, and *Winning Sperm Party*, *Cry Parrot* and others followed in their steps. As it will become apparent (Chapters 3 & 5), my informants' practices were largely influenced by the collective's *êthos*, which was exemplified in a published 'about us' statement:

> The door prices are kept affordable and the bands are paid well in order to support a sustainable and ethical network for live music. Costs are kept low and bands are fed, paid and given a decent place to sleep. All the money made on the door goes to covering costs and paying the bands and consequently there are no guest lists. Every effort is made to keep music inclusive, cheap, anti-elitist and fun. Nuts and Seeds frown upon the following: Attempts to enter gigs without paying the door fee (rarely in excess of 4 pounds) because you work for music press/a record label/ music publishing organization etc. Deluded aspirations to major label stardom leaving the magnanimous and good willed trampled in your wake. Taking down our posters. Nuts and Seeds will not take down your posters.[27]

To the aforementioned examples, we should add the constant influx of sounds and touring bands, which, at times, may have been more important in shaping the music and approach of local cultural producers. Similarly, despite the fact that this thesis does not deal with Glasgow's various ethnic minorities (see Edward 2008 [1993]) and their musical heritage, it cannot be overlooked that the city's history of heavy industrialization had created from early on a sense of 'cosmopolitanism' that was rare in most British provincial cities. It has been argued that:

> [T]he pace, scale and impact of industrialization forged urban heterogeneity that was to become manifest in an artistic community that combined the best of European, English, lowland Scots and Gaelic culture. Moreover, the commercial development of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought further cultural variety to the city, from Eastern Europe, from Italy, from the United States; and most recently from the Indian sub-continent (Booth & Boyle 1993: 23).[28]

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[27] Retrieved from http://www.myspace.com/nutsseeds [Accessed 27 May 2012].

[28] For only one example, Glasgow boasted a considerable country music fan base revolving mainly around the Grand Ole Opry music venue.

Although the presence of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds in the DiY cohort was not strong, a non-British element was occasionally apparent. This was particularly due to the large number of incoming students, some of whom studied at the GSA (Chapter 4).

All these musically, culturally and operationally diverse examples testify to the fact that my informants had at their disposal an array of established paths to follow, emulate or avoid. However, this is only part of the story, and perceiving the intensity of cultural activities as being triggered by individual cases or successes risks distorting a much more complex and multi-layered reality. Similarly, the increasing number of venues, galleries and other music and art-related spaces has provided many opportunities for the flourishing of different activities, but they have also been the direct *outcome* of those activities, without which the viability of many small venues and galleries would be in doubt.

The extent to which grassroots music and art in Glasgow was sustained and nurtured by the sheer determination of groups and individuals can be demonstrated by the long-standing 'tradition' of local cultural producers forging links with other individuals and institutions outside the locality. In turn, this reflects the relative lack of appropriate infrastructure in Glasgow, as opposed to other cities such as London, something that would serve as the backbone of a healthy and evolving music industry (Williamson *et al* 2003).

This has done as much to inhibit as to promote music and art-making in the city, both of which have been subsequently molded by a substantial degree of creative initiative and self-reliance. As Lowndes's account demonstrates (2010), the grassroots nature of much local cultural activity has been equally determined by the lack of an established market and media exposure. This has ensured a certain degree of (by no means complete) insularity and independence from funders and taste-makers alike. The expectation of making a living from one's art or music was not ingrained within a mindset geared

towards anti-commercialism and instead oriented towards a collaborative approach in producing music and art. Such an approach has been encouraged by the city's relatively small size, as well as its provincial character, which facilitates collective activity and the focused and uninterrupted creative work of individuals.

Although Glasgow's grassroots music scene regularly features in non-specialist journalistic accounts (e.g. Porter 2004; Nicholson 2009), its protagonists have managed to stay under the radar of mainstream publicity for the most part. Indeed, the majority of these activities remain undocumented due to their ephemeral character. However, the lack of momentum in the media – whose largely retrospective accounts fail to capture contemporary developments in-the-making – does not translate into these events and activities being of lesser importance to the groups of people that witness them or make them happen. It is exactly these close-knit groups and particularly their mutual desire to make things *happen* that supports and runs through their creative endeavours.

Several bands and artists have achieved considerable fame and commercial success, and have sparked the interest of younger generations by contributing to local cultural mythology. This thesis does not focus upon such examples, because it is the vast number of undocumented creative practices that in reality sustain and support cultural production in the city *in conjunction with* established local actors and institutions. The question of whether a small segment of local actors, whose practices and views are discussed in subsequent chapters, will 'make it' (Cohen 1991), does not form part of my ethnographic examination.

After all, this appeared to be irrelevant to the musicians and other actors' motivations for engaging in music practices in the first place. Neither this nor the lack of appropriate infrastructure preclude the possibility (or the desire for that matter) of success. As Lowndes puts it: 'The outlook of these individuals has been informed less by an absence of financial constraints, than by a refusal to let those constraints limit their ambitions' (2010: 419-420). However, these ambitions for numerous local musicians

and artists have been shaped by a history of creative practice in the city that, at times, seemed to have taken place for its own sake, with long-term, material-oriented objectives being of secondary importance.

1.5 Towards a Local Êthos

In this chapter I have attempted to outline the historical, economic and political processes that have shaped Glasgow. The heterogeneity of the place and the forcefulness of urban change render generalizations impossible (Berry & Whyte 1987: 4). The unpredictable quality of the city is reflected in its urban fabric and an ever changing outlook, which essentially renders the history of Glasgow a history of change. From early on, Glasgow combined the best and the worst characteristics of urban living and served as a telling example of the uneasy and conflicting realities of industrial capitalism. As such, Glasgow has been a 'dual city' for a long time and, therefore, the co-existence of a regenerated 'cultural' city centre alongside peripheral housing estates inhabited by disadvantaged populations is the culmination of a process deeply embedded in local history (Danson & Mooney 1998; Mooney & Danson 1997). If this distinction fails to grasp and account for the complexities of lived experience and how the two worlds interpenetrate in everyday life, it is certain that these two extremes exist in the city, both concretely and figuratively (as shown in the example of Workers City).

This nexus between 'culture' and privation, development and exclusion, wealth and unemployment, hard living conditions and pride, is what gives Glasgow its distinctive character and informs the city's attitude to the world. For all the uncomfortable realities and the seemingly juxtaposed differences between the privileged and the less well-off Glaswegians in different parts of the city, let us not forget that Glasgow does not exist in a vacuum. Glasgow means different things to different people, and there are series of demarcations amongst the city dwellers beyond income indicators, ranging from religious (Gallagher 1987) to class differences (see above). Where other characteristics, such as accent, come into play, it has been noted that there is a tendency, as a defensive

mechanism towards outsiders, to submerge local identity within a broader image of Scottishness, and it is more likely to contrast that image with an English identity, rather than engage in inter-local comparisons (Charsley 1986: 179, 181).

In the 1997 referendum, 84 percent of Glaswegians voted in favour of a Scottish parliament, the second highest vote in the country (Maver 2000: 248-249). Yet, although Scotland is no longer a 'stateless' nation (McCrone 1992), the extent to which devolution has facilitated or can contribute towards the development of a music industry sensitive to local concerns remains to be seen (Symon & Cloonan 2002). Whatever such music policy might be (see Cloonan 2007; Williamson *et al* 2003), local 'culture' should feature prominently in it. Clearly, the question of whether an economically successful Scottish band actually *is* or should be 'Scottish', in the sense that it appeals to a regional or national identity, is ambiguous (Frith 1996a; Symon 1997; Williamson *et al* 2003). For Glasgow, bringing musical culture to the foreground would primarily involve *not* intervention, but support for the vibrant informal networks of musicians already based in the city.

I hope to have shown that individual success and the backbone of local music and creativity have been historically rooted in the cooperation of individuals making music not *necessarily* for profit, and that this *êthos* embodied cultural conceptions as well as pragmatic responses to everyday circumstances. The existence of prestigious institutions or historical antecedents, and the relative lack of accessible musical infrastructures foreclose music-making because they do not practically impinge upon or cater for the everyday, creative needs of many. But as we have seen, they also facilitate creativity because they anticipate without determining or channeling these practices. This is reinforced through communication and occasional collaboration between both sides (but not the ends) of the spectrum. Williamson, Cloonan and Frith close their report on the status and the future of the Scottish music industry with the following words:

[W]e have been concerned here primarily with the problems of developing the Music industry in Scotland – hence the emphasis on business practice. But if, as we suggest, a healthy music economy is dependent on a healthy music culture, then policy should be concerned not just with business growth, and changing the way things are done, but also with people's ability to make a living from music *without* being ambitious to change their lives. As a cultural industry music is unique – and uniquely important – because so much of its commercial success depends on people making and listening to music for its own sake, without economic concerns at all (2003: 127-128).

Chapter 2: Music, Ethics and the City

2.1 Music in Culture and Music as Culture

The transient and intangible nature of sound presents particular challenges to the ethnographic description of music. This is reflected in and further intensified by the apparent lack of analytical tools that would sufficiently account for this cultural form. Western musicology has been at the forefront of the academic discourse, but the analysis of musical works – of music as *text* – is predicated upon ethnocentric definitions and assumptions. Crucially, it fails to address how music is practiced and experienced within social settings and everyday life. In other words, it conceals the social relationships and practices that music constitutes and which constitute it. This thesis, therefore, begins from the premise that music is *prima facie* a social practice and process, which engages actors beyond what we would designate as 'musicians'. As Christopher Small has argued, the participants in 'musicking' are *anyone* engaged in *any* capacity in a musical performance (1998: 9).

Further difficulties arise from the Western definition of music 'as any communicational practice which organizes sound in terms of pitch, duration, timbre and loudness' (Stokes 1996: 383). Music cannot be disentangled from its multiple functions, which are always culturally sensitive (McLeod 1974: 107). Moreover, it would be inappropriate – indeed ethnocentric – to attempt a definition of music that disregards indigenous categories. Certain forms of speech, such as the Maori *haka*, are considered music, while in Middle Eastern contexts, the chanting of passages from the Qur'an is never classified as 'singing' but as recitation, because 'music' and 'song' connote immorality (Stokes 1996: 384; cf. Hirschkind 2006: 35). Furthermore, various indigenous conceptions of music do not necessarily correspond with the Western assumption that music and dance are interrelated but essentially separate entities (Kaeppler 1978: 33). Therefore, a definition of music should not depend upon its formal properties, but on how people perceive and make use of it (Finnegan 1989: 7).

It is striking to observe that, even within anthropology, the study of popular music (now an emerging discipline in its own right) has been both peripheral and irregular. Undoubtedly, treating music as an abstraction and an idealised form rather than an embedded and widespread cultural practice has inhibited the flourishing of anthropological research on the topic (McLeod 1974: 107). Although music reflects important ethnographic and theoretical questions concerning power, agency, identity and personhood, to name but a few, an anthropological approach has been quite modest (Mahon 2000: 467-468). While the ethnographic initiation of music into anthropology has been slow to emerge, the neighbouring discipline of ethnomusicology introduced *anthropology* into music.

It was not until ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam published his influential book, *The Anthropology of Music* (1964), that the academic study of music turned to the examination of music as social practice and process. Merriam suggested that an anthropological apparatus could illuminate cultural aspects and meanings hitherto underplayed or obscured by the established practices of abstracting musical works from their social settings and human behaviour, and by treating music as a 'product'. He defined ethnomusicology as the study of music *in* culture and devised a multi-layered approach through a simple threefold model, involving 'conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself' (ibid.: 32). Merriam's groundbreaking contribution paved the way for scholars without musical backgrounds and successfully outlined the ways in which music could fit into the project of anthropology.

A more dynamic approach is demonstrated by Anthony Seeger's *Why Suyá Sing* (1987), an ethnographic account of the Suyá Indians in Mato Grosso, Brazil, and specifically of their performance of the Mouse Ceremony. The ceremony lasts fourteen days, during which notions of space and time, as well as human relationships are enacted and rearticulated through singing. This marks a shift from Merriam's formulation of music *in* culture to the study of music *as* culture. Rather than music being perceived as part of

the culture in question, a *musical anthropology*, as Seeger suggests, 'studies social life as a performance' and conceives music as a fundamental process, which not only reflects pre-existing contexts, structures and values, but also generates and affects society and culture (1987: xiii-xiv).

But how are we to make sense of and employ the idea that society and culture happen 'in music', in late-capitalist environments where '[m]usic often seems to do little more than fill a silence left by something else' (Stokes 1994: 2)? And yet, as Stokes argues, and as DeNora (2000) has shown, it would be hard to imagine our everyday lives without the presence of music. Not only does music provide the background or the soundtrack to our busy lives, but it is an intrinsic dimension of the way we live and conduct ourselves in different contexts. For Stokes (1994), this becomes particularly evident in music's capacity to inform, transform, evoke, construct, contest and negotiate a sense of place and thus to *locate* subjects in space. As such, music, space and place should be seen as interconnected (Connell & Gibson 2003). Therefore, my initial premise should be complemented by the conviction that music – in both urban and rural environments – is also a spatial practice.

Music also 'moves' us. By this, I do not only mean that music has an emotional effect but, as any listener or performer knows, that music engages and envelops our bodies in ways unmatched by any other entity. Whether playing, listening or dancing to music, sound organizes bodies and orchestrates movement. Music demands attention: the body cannot escape it because sound vibrates and penetrates it – music *affects* bodies. Thus, music also emerges as an intrinsically bodily practice.

This seems, to me, a way to study the musical qualities of music practices, that is, how sound 'in itself' has the ability to elicit specific bodily states and articulate sensory and affective registers that condition and inform our corporeal engagements with the social world. This also addresses the long-standing (and still present) bias in ethnomusicology, whereby a competent ethnographer is expected to have musical skills, if not a

participating musician within the culture he or she studies. It further challenges the anthropological assumption that studying music *per se* results in 'many compelling anthropological and theoretical questions' being 'swept to the sidelines' (Bigenho 2008: 28).

For sure, musical analysis is not the anthropologist's craft and I agree with Bigenho that the privileging of music, which is consonant with music's perceived 'special' nature, is a drawback. Ultimately, anthropologists are not ethnomusicologists. To expect an anthropologist to extract meaning from musical notation would be a category error. Therefore, although musicological analysis would be relevant, it is beyond the scope of this thesis, as well as my own scope of knowledge. Nevertheless, this does not preclude us from approaching the social in terms of the 'musical'. Indeed, sound can be a meaningful object of anthropological analysis in and of itself (e.g. Feld 1996; Samuels *et al* 2010).

While it may address music *as* culture, anthropology cannot lose sight of the overlapping levels of meaning that frame music-making. Some of the best anthropological treatments of Western popular music testify to this (Cohen 1991; Finnegan 1989). Therefore, in what follows, my arguments borrow insights from across the range of disciplines within which the consideration of music as a form of practice has been prevalent. Even within anthropology, music features prominently in the writings of ethnographers grappling with such diverse topics as ritual, technology, affect, or the city. In each case, music emerges as an important site for the articulation of meaning, social reproduction and agency. In their analyses, anthropologists have engaged the practico-material circumstances that facilitate music-making, as well as the social and cultural values that mobilize actors and make music possible.

But what my fieldwork in Glasgow taught me goes further than this. My informants' involvement in music was not confined to what one would call 'leisure'. Rather than being set apart from more 'serious' engagements, DiY music activity was a fundamental

part of their lives and it was conceived of as an ethical practice. This focus on being 'ethical' did not nullify the primary reason for making music, namely 'fun' and pleasure. Instead, this primary motivation and an ethical perspective were interlinked. Upon my arrival in Glasgow (after a short trip on the train), I did not anticipate that the chain of events described in the Introduction would turn my attention to the association of music with ethics.

Even during my increasing familiarity with the DiY *êthos* I did not readily make the connection between music and virtuous action. Only after repeated observations and verbal exchanges did music practices start to gradually unfold as ethical practices. I began to see clearly that music-making embodied an ethical dimension and a form of self-cultivation that was an intrinsic modality of my informants' social lives. Ever since punk, DiY's claim to an 'alternative' music culture and mode of being stood for a different ethics, which was ostensibly in conflict with the established norms (of the music industry and society at large).

But this was exactly the reason for my initial ethnographic shortsightedness, namely that the conflation between a music 'culture' and its ethics made it difficult to pinpoint *what* was ethical about it. This argument is not something new. In fact, it is precisely the same observation that has recently sparked an 'ethical turn' in anthropology. As James Laidlaw has succinctly pointed out (2002), one of the effects of the Durkheimian legacy was to paralyze and preclude any anthropological attempts to study ethics. For Durkheim, society *was* morality (1953 [1906], 1957 [1937]). It follows that, either anthropologists have been studying ethics all along, or that there was no way of distinguishing the ethical from the social in order to address the former ethnographically. The truth lies somewhere in between, but it is only recently that anthropology decidedly turned its attention to ethics as a distinctive field of inquiry. This has spurred an array of anthropological accounts in diverse contexts and on

variable themes. However, ethnographic data explicitly on music and ethics is lacking, both within and outside of anthropology.[29]

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The remainder of this chapter begins with the examination of various ethnographic approaches to music, paying particular attention to works that have influenced my approach. A number of relevant works are reserved for consideration in subsequent chapters. I continue with an overview of the main conceptual frameworks currently available in social-scientific literature for the study and representation of music collectivities. I will suggest that, despite their analytical virtues, they fail to grasp the nuances of everyday music practice and to account for the notion of 'the local' as an ethical dimension of social life. Finnegan's (1989) concept of 'pathways' seems to capture aspects missed in other approaches, by cutting through the structure/agency dualism and by allowing me to embed processes of ethical transformation and becoming within a spatial framework.

The discussion then proceeds to examine the anthropological literature on ethics. Specifically, I will provide a detailed outline of contemporary approaches to what is essentially an emerging field, by clarifying my use of the terms and by highlighting the importance of the ideas of ethical cultivation, freedom and virtuous practice for my ethnographic description. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by arguing that music practice constituted my informants' means to assert their presence on the musical and urban terrain of Glasgow. The effort to realize an ethical self through music practice was predicated upon an intense interaction with the urban environment and culminated

[29] To the best of my knowledge, the only exception is an unpublished PhD dissertation on punk in Leeds and Bradford (Gordon 2005). Gordon narrows his approach to 'DiY punk ethics', and he is preoccupied with issues of purity and authenticity and not with questions of ethical cultivation. Gordon is not clear about his definition of 'ethics'. From his account and the description of conflicts between different punk ethics we could discern that he identifies it with the 'values', 'habits' and 'conduct' of participants in the punk 'scenes' he studied.

in the 'musical' production and transformation of urban spaces. This helps us to start conceptualizing music-making in the city as a distinctively urban practice.

2.2 Ethnographies of Music

The relationship between anthropology and music, although limited in comparison with other subfields such as kinship or religion, has produced a vibrant body of work. This attests to the multifarious meanings of music cross-culturally and underscores the discipline's distinctive potential to contribute to our understanding of music as a social and cultural actuality. This by no means exhaustive review cites works that demonstrate thematic overlap and grapple with multiple issues, something which unavoidably renders my classification somewhat arbitrary.[30]

I include certain ethnographic examples from ethnomusicology, sociology, cultural studies and popular music studies for the plain reason that the academic study of music has been quite plentiful in these disciplines. These studies' valuable insights have and could in the future benefit anthropological approaches to music. This corpus of culturally diverse ethnographies exemplifies the complexity of the nexus between music and social life and demonstrates an understanding of music as a site for the creative appropriation, negotiation and articulation of meaning. This contrasts with a definition of music as a mass-mediated cultural form lacking artistic quality and targeting passive consumers, as opposed to the ideal of an 'authentic', 'high' art (Horkheimer & Adorno 1972 [1944]).

The performance paradigm and its expressive symbolisms has taught us that music performances reveal overlapping levels of meaning that have to be examined *in situ* (Turner 1969, 1977, 1983, 1988). Strikingly, because music performances involve the active participation of audiences, the artificial performer/audience divide has been

[30] For a comprehensive overview of relevant anthropological approaches, see Feld and Fox (1994), Kaeppler (1978), Mahon (2000), McLeod (1974), Samuels *et al* (2010) and Stokes (2004).

challenged. For example, Finnegan demonstrates how in the classical music world, the formal, silent posture and the lack of bodily movement on the part of audience members does not constitute a passive behaviour, but rather a *necessary* component of successful performances (1989: 152). In other ethnographic contexts this idea is made explicit. The intense interaction between blues performers and audiences has been documented by Keil (1966), while music spectatorship *per se* has been recently scrutinized within the context of 'indie' music in Britain (Fonarow 2006).

Keil demonstrates the crucial role of audiences and how their communication with performers symbolically expressed ideas important for the black community. Fonarow's ethnography considers gig participation as a conversion narrative and an embodied metaphor for the ritual transformation of 'physically and emotionally exuberant youth to Protestant adulthood' (2006: 182). Thus, apart from the apparent disintegration of the boundary between performers and audiences, the interaction that takes place in music events embodies and disseminates certain ideas, values and meanings. This was also evident in my own research, where audience comportment and interaction with the bands was articulated upon mutually shared affects and etiquette (Chapter 4).[31] Besides, the dissolution of this boundary was readily observable in the sense that, quite frequently, various audience members were *performing* on the night, while the spatial boundary separating stage and audience area was virtually non-existent.

The articulation and expression of meaning in music events and the affirmation of group values highlight music's association with ritual. Although my argument diverges from Fonarow's connection between popular music and ritual, there have been notable studies about the conjunction of musical forms and bodily movements as parts of shamanistic and spiritual practices (e.g. Laderman 1991; Moyle 2007; Rouget 1985). The association of drumming with transition between different ritual states, as well as the intrinsic role of music and dance in ritual, have been stressed by Needham (1967)

[31] This echoes the musical-aesthetic notion of *ṭarab* (Racy 2003). In the context of Arab musical traditions, *ṭarab* encapsulates a musically induced 'ecstacy' and the intersubjective nature of musical performances, engendered through the mutual contribution of performers and audiences.

and Bloch (1989) respectively. Finally, the choreographic and rhythmical aspects of ritual are the main themes of Gell's essay on Umeda dance (1985). Despite the importance of the aforementioned works, Kaeppler recently noted that anthropological research on the relationship between bodily movement and ritual structure has been quite limited (2010: 263).

McLeod argues that the behavioural constraints that music imposes and its subsequent association with comportment in ritual – which itself requires a high degree of redundancy – present a double paradox (1974: 110-111). First, music is largely used in recreational contexts that presuppose a lesser degree of austerity and rigidity. Second, recreational music often conveys social critique and focuses upon conflict and uncertainty rather than the affirmation of social order. In the face of uncertainty, McLeod continues, music serves to mediate between individuals and their dealings within adverse circumstances by attempting to bring the latter into an intelligible form. Thus, it would be more correct to perceive music as a mechanism for dealing with uncertainty, rather than the means to support and reproduce established norms. The performance conventions of DiY music events cannot be seen as forms of redundant, ritualistic behaviour. This is not due to their 'messy' or 'shambolic' character (Chapter 3), but because they followed *irregular* patterns, the fluidity of which reflected ethical concerns.

As I will argue in Chapter 4, music is first and foremost an affective experience that engages the body in its totality. An influential contribution at the nexus between music, body and dance is John Blacking's work (e.g. 1977, 1979), which examines the corporeal qualities that underpin musical ability and performance within an analytical framework of the body. Blacking's writings have been instrumental in the emergence of the anthropology of dance (see Grau 1993).[32] Music's capacity to invoke emotions and bodily sensations is well-known: music 'moves' us. Finnegan (2003) notes that musical

[32] Notable contributions include Cowan (1990), Hanna (1983, 1987 [1979]), Kringelbach & Skinner (2012), Sklar (2001) and Spencer (1985).

'experience' has not been clearly defined, and suggests that the term should cut across a mind-body dualism to encompass emotional, bodily, affective and expressive registers and how these come into play in variegated contexts. Although I favour the term 'affect' over 'emotion' for reasons discussed in Chapter 4, the interface between music, sound and speech-based forms, such as singing or poetry performance, provides a lens into the emotional qualities of sound.

Sound symbolism and expression has been Feld's subject-matter in his ethnography among the Kaluli (1982), a people who perceive the sound of singing as the cry of birds, with textual forms representing 'bird sound words'. The crucial role of birds rests on the belief that they embody the spirits of dead people. In a manner reminiscent of Seeger's account of the Suyá, Feld demonstrates how sounds and songs enact cosmological beliefs and correspond with an array of cultural ideas and values, such as kinship bonds, social behaviour and religious thought. According to Feld, singing and weeping as the mutual sharing of feelings of grief are expressive of the theme of reciprocity – which is 'highly visible' in the Kaluli society (ibid.: 6). But more than this, through the performance of moving songs the Kaluli organize and express their entire emotional world. This is hardly surprising considering that, as a group dwelling in a dense rain forest, the Kaluli 'use sound to advantage over other sensory systems' (ibid.: 10; see also Gell 1995). Apart from highly articulate cosmological systems, sonically transmitted emotions also convey underlying political concerns. For example, Abu-Lughod (1986) demonstrates how the expression of emotions in Bedouin poetry is intertwined with issues of social power and control.

Along similar lines, Caton's (1990) ethnography of Yemeni tribal poetics exhibits the idiom's cultural and political significance. Caton examines poetry as a cultural practice and as a means to strengthen tribal ideology. Tribal poetry flows directly from the group's values and it is considered an integral part of tribal identity. The interrelation between tribalism and poetry exemplifies how political issues can be embedded in cultural forms and identity formation. Boissevain's (1965) research in religious cults,

music and political rivalry in Malta is also a case in point, and it further alludes to the entanglements between music and politics. Hirschkind's ethnography in Cairo (2006) elucidates the relationship between the act of listening to sermons and religious ethics. Hirschkind argues that the careful listening of sermons signifies a practice of ethical self-cultivation, against the prevalent view of their association with radical or fundamentalist Islam.

The general premise that 'music' practice – in the broadest sense – encapsulates a form of self-making is central to my argument. In Chapter 4, I will demonstrate how music-making constitutes a deeply affective experience, while the 'political' resonance of DiY practice will be discussed in Chapter 6. The meaning of affect that I employ here deviates from Qureshi's (2000) exploration of the affective, that is, emotional qualities of *sarangi* instrument playing and the embodiment of cultural memory (see also Kapchan 2006).[33] Qureshi foregrounds issues of embodiment and affect in instrument playing, but her analysis focuses upon the rich instrumental symbolisms associated with *sarangis*. However, I examine musical affect in its corporeality. For this, I turn from the relationship between the body and musical instruments to the body *as* an instrument (Chapter 4).

Music has also been a field, within which scholars have studied ethnicity (e.g. Cooley 2005; Kallimopoulou 2009; Regev 2004; Stokes 1994; Waterman 1990), as well as nationalism (e.g. Askew 2002; Ramnarine 2003; Szemere 2001). Stokes argues that 'music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them' (1994: 5). Following my empirical observations, in this thesis I do not explicitly deal with Scottishness or what it 'means' to be Glaswegian, beyond the consideration of a local *êthos* in music practice (Chapter 1). However, in DiY music-making, spatial,

[33] Dent (2009) scrutinizes the ways in which memories are enacted in Brazilian rural music forms by tracing the parallel trajectories of the music's increasing popularity and the country's transition from a rural to a modern economy. Similar ideas about music and social and cultural change have also been analyzed elsewhere (e.g. Baranovitch 2003; Cushman 1995; Moore 2006).

musical and, above all, ethical boundaries were pertinent to my informants' music practices and their connections to other local and non-local actors.

Cultural memory was enacted, not at a macro level or as a sense of nostalgia grounded in a musical tradition, but rather in the role that the ill-defined legacy of DiY (Chapter 6) played in decision-making and the overall conduct of individuals. DiY's contested definition meant that my informants would regularly confront ethical dilemmas (Chapter 5). Therefore, change was not only a characteristic of the transforming urban and social circumstances within which music actors had to operate; it was integral to the very nature of DiY, something that was reflected in the short life-cycles of many bands, their shifting membership, as well as the precarious financial circumstances that sustained musical activities. The open-ended nature of a DiY *êthos* was also predicated upon direct cooperation between a large number of individuals. Perhaps it was because of this that, to the best of my knowledge, gender relations seldom arose as an issue (see below).

Gender has been a recurrent theme in ethnographies of music (e.g. Cohen 1991; Fonarow 2006; Koskoff 1987; Leblanc 1999; Walser 1993), as have 'youth' (e.g. Bennett 1999a; Fornäs *et al* 1995), 'deviance' (e.g. Becker 1963; Redhead 1993) and 'style' (e.g. Fox 1987; Hodkinson 2002).[34] Shank (1994), following a Lacanian perspective, has provided a nuanced account of identity formation through music practice. A participating musician, Shank studied the rock'n'roll music scene in Austin, Texas. Through a historical overview of local music traditions, he demonstrates how the creative appropriation of these forms by Austin's university students had resulted in the emergence of music-making as the fundamental means for the articulation of identity. This subsequently influenced the codes and practices of various local music genres and thus the proliferation of the musical production of subjectivity. Austin was transformed

[34] A host of relevant but non-ethnographic studies on the relationship between music, youth and style were conducted in the 1970s from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCC). See the brief discussion of 'subcultures' below.

into the ideal site for the exploration of new identities, a process which, according to Shank, the commodification of music currently seems to withhold.

Despite the ephemeral, intermittent and fluctuating nature of much musical activity in Glasgow, I would nevertheless hesitate to embrace Shank's conviction that individuals involved in music-making were 'united by an intensity of commitment driven by anxiety' (1994: 131). Nor do I hold that my informants were 'deviant' and thus driven to form a homogeneous group of 'outsiders' (Becker 1963), somehow inhabiting a space outside society. After all, Becker shows that 'deviance' is a label (see Chapter 5), because a rule-breaking behaviour first requires to invoke a response from those who will *then* identify it as deviant. Such a label is ambiguous in that it fails to account for what 'outsiders' themselves define as deviance (ibid.: 8-18).

The jazz musicians in Becker's ethnography employed the term 'square' in order to convey *their* idea of what constituted an 'outsider' and a mindset which was opposed to what was valued by them. Becker's insights are useful for my argument because DiY practice necessarily relies upon difference: difference with established music practices and with 'unethical' ways of making music. Despite the existence of an *êthos* of inclusivity and open-mindedness (Chapter 5), the DiY cohort drew sharp boundaries between themselves and actors operating outside a similar ethical framework. As such, difference was perceived as important insofar as it ultimately conferred, not so much a musical, but an ethical identity (Chapter 6).

The sense of inclusivity was immediately observable in women's central role in musical and extra-musical activities. Male musicians still outnumbered female ones (Leblanc 1999), but this should be perceived as a reflection of broader social and cultural norms and expectations, rather than a characteristic peculiar to a DiY *êthos*. *Divorce* consisted of four females and one male (Chapter 4). I attended gigs by all-female bands, female musicians organized and promoted gigs and club nights, and they designed and produced posters and album covers. I interviewed several women active in music-

making and, despite my persistent questions, their critique was never related to the ideas and behaviour of individuals from the DiY network.

Male domination and, conversely, female subordination seemed to be non-issues for research participants (cf. Walser 1993: xvi), but there *was* a shared belief and acknowledgement that the music industry promoted masculine ideals by marginalizing women (Cohen 1997). The fact that my female informants were actively engaged in DiY music-making and were treated as equals by male participants does not mean that gender was irrelevant. After all, as I will show later on, there were instances where being a female performer could make a difference in how audiences perceived performances or how male technical personnel behaved, while female audience members could confront practical issues stemming from the conduct of other audience members. However, these instances were rare and, for the most part, my female informants had to deal with such behaviour outside the DiY cohort. Therefore, I remain sensitive to gender issues but, following my informants' views and my own ethnographic observations, I focus on both men and women involved in DiY music practice and how this supportive environment *privileged* rather than dismissed participation, female or otherwise.

The pluralism of music genres and the egalitarianism and inclusiveness professed by research participants also translated into the lack of distinctive 'styles'. Clothing did not play a role in signifying a particular status or generating a sense of belonging. This contrasts with a good deal of research in musical 'subcultures', such as Hodkinson's recent study of goth (2002), a particularly spectacular form. My informants showed no interest in clothes as identifiers of a musical or 'subcultural identity' (Kruse 1993). They did, however, pay attention to the visual elements and the overall sensual qualities revolving around music-making, such as gig posters and record sleeves, and occasionally dressed up for specific performances (Chapter 4). DiY also resisted the categorization of 'youth culture'. Indeed, certain participants were already in their thirties or forties.

I have alluded to my informants' indifference to the 'Glaswegianess' of their music-making, which partially rendered the notion of 'the local' problematic (Chapter 6). As I argued in the previous chapter, the specificity of the city enters and affects creativity in explicit but also unconscious ways. Urban contexts represent a fertile ground for musical interactions and various scholars have accounted for music's ubiquity and its importance in urban living (Finnegan 1989), urban migration and its effects on traditional music (Turino 1993), and the plural worlds of street musicians (Tanenbaum 1995). Cohen (1994, 1995, 2007) brings various threads together in order to show how a city's identity can become inextricably linked with particular types of music or 'sounds'. Discourses around issues of authenticity in relation to place have romanticized Liverpool in particular, and the resulting fetishization of the local has facilitated the promotion of the city through music and the promotion of music through the city (Connell & Gibson 2003: 277). Although my ethnographic examination of DiY music practices does not reveal such a strong, 'sensuous' identification between music and the city, Sheila Whiteley is right when she states that:

> As well as providing the socio-cultural backdrop for distinctive musical practices and innovations, urban and rural spaces also provide the rich experiential settings in which music is consumed. In each case, music becomes a key resource for different cultural groups in terms of the ways in which they make sense and negotiate the everyday (2004: 2).

I have reserved most of my arguments about music and the urban for discussion in the following chapter (see also below). Nevertheless, it is important to state here that music represented for my informants important means by which they navigated the urban landscape and produced meaning in their everyday lives. Music practice empowered and enabled them to exercise what Henri Lefebvre has called 'the right to the city', the right to inhabit particular spaces (1996, 2003). The creative appropriation and use of urban spaces became the process through which music-making emerged as a skilled, urban practice (Chapter 6).

The range of the spaces employed for music performances was remarkable: pubs, bars and clubs; dilapidated or abandoned buildings; flats, houses and basements; music studios, record stores and art galleries; kebab shops and community centres. These did not exclude open, public spaces (Chapter 3). However, although street performing or 'busking' was a popular practice in Glasgow, the specific events I will refer to did not so much convey a commitment to a specific form of outdoor music performance. Rather, they were related to a conscious and explicit motivation to challenge the legitimization of indoor gigs as the only proper contexts for live music dissemination. Thus, these events had an ethical and 'political' dimension in addition to practical benefits (see also Tanenbaum 1995: 19).

Another theme that pervades my analysis is the failure of the concept of 'amateurism' to grasp the ethical underpinnings of DiY practice in relation to its 'professional' counterparts (Chapter 3). The formation and function of amateur musical groups or bands has been chronicled in ethnographies by Behr (2010), Bennett (1980), Gay (1991) and White (1983). Cohen (1991) further examined the tension between musical creativity and commercial concerns, while Finnegan (1989) focused on the prolific but 'hidden' activity of an array of musicians in Milton Keynes. Anthropologists have not confined their analyses to the undocumented practices and quotidian lives of everyday musicians. The conventions and constraints of professional music worlds have become the ethnographic foci of Baily (1988) and Cottrell (2003). In addition, Atkinson (2006) and Born's (1995) studies of the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff and IRCAM in Paris respectively have documented the day-to-day activities of high profile cultural institutions.

The distinction between amateurs and professionals is a problematic one. As will become apparent, the two terms represent abstractions or objectified categories that do not correspond with musicians' own meanings and conceptions about their practice. We can neither retain an absolute distinction between amateurs and professionals, nor are we warranted to conceptualize commerce as creativity's 'other' (Chapters 5 & 6). The

problem arises from the connotations of status and livelihood associated with professionalism. Yet in an essentially non-profit operation such as DiY music-making, this definition becomes irrelevant. The second reason is a cultural one. In particular, so-called 'amateur' music is usually – but mistakenly – examined within a 'leisure' framework. It is telling that my informants almost never spoke of 'professionals' or 'amateurs'. When they were prompted to contextualize their ideas in these terms, they provided definitions on the basis of dedication and commitment (or the lack thereof), thus reversing popular opinion on the subject.

The disintegration of this dualism opens the way to consider whether additional distinctions can be reformulated. For example, in her translocal study of dance and rave culture Thorton (1995) draws on Bourdieu's work (see below) and coins the term 'subcultural capital' in order to explain issues surrounding opposition to the 'mainstream'. This opposition, however, which is largely mediated and constructed through media representations, does not directly map onto the distinction between creativity and commerce. Therefore, the overlap that is normally encountered with regards to the latter dichotomy might support a less singular approach to the former. This reveals the risks of applying distinctions as hard and fast realities upon lived experience, the nuances of which evade the rigidity of social-scientific frameworks.

The global/local distinction and the appropriation of music forms is a third theme, addressed by various scholars in studies about Indonesia (Baulch 2008; Luvaas 2009, 2012, 2013) and Japan (Matsue 2009), among other sites. I am not concerned here with issues or debates about globalization (e.g. Appadurai 1996; Kearney 1995), or with how my informants were 'internationalizing their music' or 'localizing international music' (Luvaas 2012: 137). By contrast, I am interested in how 'the local' has been obscured and has become an elusive notion and a catchword that nevertheless fails to 'catch' the essence behind the word (Lambek 2011). As I will further elaborate in Chapter 6, locality (and DiY as such) should be recast as a form of ethical life and not as a piece in the global puzzle. Instead of perceiving localities as constituting a

homogeneous global grid, I agree with Lambek that, in transcending geographical boundaries, the singularity and heterogeneity of the local dwells in ethical acts; specifically, in how subjects constitute themselves and the locality through music practices.

The interpenetration of the local and the global becomes apparent in the nexus between virtual technology, sociality and music, which has caught the interest of several scholars (e.g. Condry 2004; Giesler & Pohlmann 2003; Kibby 2000; Lysloff 2003), and which pervaded a great deal of my informants' practices (Part II). Digital media were employed for practical as well as ethical purposes (Chapter 3). The impact of technology has been further scrutinized in relation to radio (Bessire & Fisher 2012; O'Connor 2006) and the music industries of the periphery (Wallis & Malm 1984).

Manuel (1992) explores the effects of cassette technology in India, by situating the phenomenon within a larger socio-economic context. Issues of autonomy, freedom, and national integrity are reflected in 'cassette culture', along with a critique of the mass media. Although the mobilization of specific technologies carried ethical meanings (Chapter 3), my informants' everyday use of technology also exemplified a process of 'making do' (de Certeau 1984). Virtual technology played an important role in DiY practice (see also Luvaas 2012), mainly in the promotion of music events, in the dissemination of recorded music and in the effective communication between groups and individuals, both within as well as outside of Glasgow.

The geographic and thematic diversity of the aforementioned ethnographic material testifies to the idea that music is a field conducive to the study of social life in its various manifestations. The following section explores in greater detail two ethnographic monographs, which address several of the issues that pertain to my analysis. These works have examined the everyday practices of musicians in two provincial English cities.

2.3 Music-Making in Liverpool and Milton Keynes

Finnegan's (1989) study of amateur musicians in Milton Keynes and Cohen's (1991) account of post-punk bands in Liverpool belong to the 1980s shift towards an anthropology 'at home' (Cole 1977; Jackson 1987a; Messerschmidt 1981a).[35] These studies consist of attempts to foreground and describe events and practices that were widely taken for granted in their social and cultural contexts, to the extent that they were rendered 'invisible' to insiders and outsiders alike. Apart from hinting at issues that encompass broader concerns within the discipline, these monographs also provide much needed ethnographic detail about hitherto underplayed cultural practices.

Finnegan's monograph (1989) exhibits remarkable breadth by comparing and contrasting the music practices of such diverse genres as classical music, jazz and folk, as well as the worlds of musical theatre, country and western, rock and pop. Finnegan provides detailed data and insightful observations on music participation and the practical organization of music in the locality. Issues of material and financial support that were crucial for the sustainability of music-making in Milton Keynes are also scrutinized. Local musicians took these practices for granted, to the extent that they themselves were often unaware of many other forms of music-making taking place simultaneously; hence Finnegan's characterization of amateur music activity as 'hidden', but not secret (ibid.: 4). Finnegan exposes a sheer amount of musical creativity and goes on to show the level of commitment and work invested in music-making.

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[35] Raymond Firth and Max Gluckman are considered pioneers in the study of British society. In the United States exponents of research 'at home' included Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict (Peirano 1998: 106). Although the legitimacy and/or the possibility of insider research has been debated, the efforts of Anthony Cohen during the past few decades are considered crucial in the development of an anthropology of Britain (Rapport 2002: 4-5). According to Messerschmidt, the diverse terms in the literature that describe anthropology 'at home', such as 'insider' or 'native' research, 'auto-ethnography', 'indigenous' anthropology and so on, reflected its phenomenal growth (1981b: 13). The emergence and proliferation of anthropology 'at home' is related to practical aspects of the profession (Cole 1977: 355-358; Jackson 1987b: 8-9; Messerschmidt 1981b: 9-12). However, the conceptual backdrop of a critique of objectivity, representation and the relationship between self and other cannot be disregarded (Clifford & Marcus 1986; Marcus & Fischer 1986; Narayan 1993).

This challenges established distinctions between amateur and professional musicians, demonstrating that the two worlds are actually interdependent. Finnegan is aware of the impossibility of providing accurate numbers and covering *all* aspects of music-making, not least because of the precarious nature of much musical activity, the different definitions of 'music' and 'music groups', and the shifting identification of 'the local', both geographically and musically. However, Finnegan highlights the common and profound effects of music-making on individuals, ranging from the 'satisfaction of joint playing' (1989: 65) and 'a sense of camaraderie and enjoyment' (ibid.: 51), to 'a sense of beauty and fundamental value, of intense and profoundly felt artistic experience which could reach to the depths of one's nature' (ibid.: 41). For Finnegan, the positive feelings fostered by music-making cannot be disentangled from its collective nature. The activity of making music together is a social practice, which ascribes meaning to people's everyday lives.

The diverse but intersecting musical 'pathways' that Finnegan's musicians followed, changed or expanded, were essentially personal and socially recognized familiar routes for navigating the complexity of everyday urban living (ibid.: 305-307, 323). According to Finnegan, the collective nature of music has broader resonance for our society and is pertinent to central ideas and values in human life (ibid.: 329, 335). Echoing Blacking (1973), she argues that music is a 'distinctively human' expressive form that cuts through the mind/body dichotomy (1989: 340). As Finnegan puts it, music not only creates the necessary space for its enactment but 'it also *fills* it' (ibid.: 336).

Cohen's study of Liverpool bands (1991) is more modest in scope but richer in ethnographic detail. Cohen followed, observed and described the concrete practices of two local 'rock' bands, as well as the values underpinning their music-making. Her account grapples with the themes of band formation and function, composition and performance, gender relations, as well as the tense relationship between bands and the music industry. Her ethnography serves as a chronicle of the bands' struggle to 'make it'. Such a struggle was rooted in and informed by an ongoing tension between

creativity and commerce, and was largely motivated by the temporal frame of the economic and social downturn that characterized Liverpool in the mid-1980s, as well as the spatial frame of a post-industrial city in decline. Cohen, like Finnegan, does not engage in musicological analysis. However, she does address the music and its aesthetic meanings, and demonstrates how ideas of purity and impurity informed the bands' practices and gave rise to privileged notions of 'masculinity, democracy, egalitarianism, honesty, naturalness, and cleanliness' (1991: 4).

The interrelationships and collaborations between different bands and individuals involved in music-making is explored in painstaking detail. However, Cohen also skilfully exposes the cliquey nature of these associations, clustered around specific rehearsal and recording studios, as well as how issues of conflict and rupture within bands were concealed by an idealized egalitarian *êthos*. Moreover, women were seen as a threat to the healthy functioning of the bands (ibid.: 201-222). In her critical analysis, Cohen reveals the delicate dynamics that kept band members together and the degree to which failure was felt by and impacted upon the bands that operated under financial and social pressures, which largely affected their creativity. Oscillating between grand ambitions and phases of depression was not uncommon in the daily lives of her informants.

The social biography of these two bands can be seen as typical of many musicians at the time of Cohen's fieldwork in Liverpool. Indeed, information on the history, institutions and role of Liverpool's music scene in the proliferation of music-making is provided throughout her study. Cohen devotes a chapter to the analysis of the particular practical circumstances that facilitated, dictated or constrained band activities. The hardships, pressures and ambitions, common to so many bands and musicians trying to 'make it', had fostered a sense of collective 'destiny' but also motivated them and served to establish a strong sense of competition. Bands strived for musical originality, vehemently resisted categorization and perceived their music as part of their identity

(1991: 182-187). The music practices of these young Liverpudlians had their roots in a DiY approach that had encouraged them to form bands (ibid.: 172).

Cohen focuses upon 'rock culture' and its 'aesthetic of musical incompetence' (ibid.: 173), but also outlines certain ideas and values surrounding music in general. Thus, she points to the way in which music encompasses both the private and public spheres, for example through the public performance of deeply personal thoughts expressed in lyrics (ibid.: 177). Cohen further argues that the bands' quest for originality had its roots in related historical trends within the arts during the 20th century (ibid.: 182), as well as class dynamics (ibid.: 196-197). For Cohen, the visceral properties of music-making and its inherent emotional and pleasurable qualities conjure up an image of music as the ideal experiential medium for the production of meaning (ibid.: 190-191). Music's ability to embody, reflect and sonically express meaning was evident in the bands' compositions. Although not overtly politicized, their music was still an implicit social critique and an aurally articulated tension between creativity and commerce, which was integral to they way in which these bands operated. At the same time, Cohen says, music has the distinctive capacity to *affect* society through the dissemination of these meanings. Music is 'good to think' (ibid.: 191).

Finnegan and Cohen's contributions are substantial. Their accounts are valuable ethnographic records of grassroots music practices in British urban environments. But their textured descriptions further constitute exemplary contemplations of the profound value of music in social life that is irreducible to any particular socio-cultural function or context. My own research shares various similarities with these works. For example, I have decided to focus upon individuals and groups operating at a grassroots level. My informants did not think of themselves as either amateur or professional musicians, promoters or record label owners (Chapter 3). Similarly, the level of commitment that I observed, as well as the work, energy and effort invested in music-making correspond with both Finnegan and Cohen's findings. My research participants shared key

similarities with Cohen's case studies by operating within a DiY framework, as well as within similar social and financial constraints.

I also encountered identical claims of egalitarianism and democracy amongst the bands, collectives, promoters and various other individuals during my fieldwork, while the contingent nature of many bands gave rise to similar patterns of conflict and rupture (Chapter 4). The musical diversity in Finnegan's study is also reflected in the pluralism of different types of music within the DiY cohort in Glasgow. The interpenetration of music and the city is also a recurring theme in this thesis (Chapters 3 & 6). Furthermore, the positive feelings of joy and pleasure generated by the collective activity of making and performing music (Chapters 3 & 4) or organizing music events (Chapter 5) find a direct parallel in these works. The at once collaborative, competitive and 'cliquey' atmosphere was also present, but the latter characteristic was mostly evident *between* larger associations rather than among the bands operating under the DiY rubric. Finally, producing music that was 'original', as well as the avoidance of musical pigeonholing, were common traits (Chapter 3 & Conclusion).

There are also important differences and lacunae that this study seeks to address. To begin with, while both ethnographies have mainly scrutinized musicians and their practices, my research equally considers individuals and groups that make music *possible* (Small 1998), including audiences, promoters and record labels that play a crucial role in music production and dissemination. As opposed to the struggle of Liverpool bands to 'make it', *none* of the bands I interacted with in Glasgow demonstrated such a desire that could be framed in terms of 'struggle'. For sure, the historical circumstances and technological means are different. However, this neither suppressed my informants' desire to excel, nor did it point to a more accessible music industry – quite the opposite. They simply lacked a conception of the process of 'making it' as a 'struggle' (or 'sell-out'). In other words, my informants did privilege creativity and flexibility above and beyond any *immediate* financial benefits, but most of them cherished the possibility of making a living in music (Chapters 5 & 6). Relevant

to this approach, however, was a realistic view of the status of the music industry, which placed future possibilities into perspective.

This leads me to a second, related point. Cohen considers rock bands and the aesthetic and ideological underpinnings of their practices, although the term 'rock' should be qualified and retrospectively it would be more precise to refer to post-punk bands (1991: 4-5). Cohen recognizes that the umbrella terms of 'rock', 'independent' or 'alternative' produce a certain set of expectations and positions for such bands within the political economy of music. However, she seems to underplay the fact that her case studies are firmly rooted, not in an 'ideological', but in an *ethical* space, which, perhaps ironically, contributes more to the self-production and reproduction of such positions (reserved for unknown, local bands – for the most part). It is exactly the same ethical stance that brings up the tension between creativity and commerce, and which transformed the Liverpool bands' desire to make it into a 'struggle'.

The ethical similarity I have observed above thus represents a paradox, namely that my informants, who embraced a similar *êthos*, did not perceive this process as a struggle. I hold that, beyond historical or local specificities, this paradox is predicated upon the malleability of a DiY *êthos* (Chapter 6). This requires a shift from musical and ideological classifications towards the consideration of differentiated, ethically-charged practices. Part of the problem derives from the insufficiency of 'ideology' to capture the evolving and variegated nature of music practices. Thus, the spectre of musical ideology as a monolithic and pre-determinative factor would certainly inhibit any meaningful ethnographic explanation of lived realities. The paradox, then, rests upon DiY 'ideology'.

It would be interesting to know how musicians and bands from other local music 'cultures' were ethically positioned and negotiated these positions in Liverpool during the mid-1980s. Along the same lines, Finnegan (1989), who focuses upon different musical 'worlds', refrains from a discussion of ethics and how it informed the decision-

making, actions, and aesthetic considerations of different music actors. I believe that Cohen (1991) and Finnegan (1989) would be better placed to highlight these nuanced differences had they recognized that many of the claims and practical decisions that musicians made were in fact ethical claims and decisions, and that their positions and actions were ethical positions and actions. In short, to recognize that, instead of ideology shaping music practice, music practice was informed by (and gave rise to) an *êthos*. I believe that, in order to redress the balance and further elucidate the relationship between musical and social action, a focus upon ethics is necessary. Therefore, instead of carving out an abstracted musical or ideological space, such as music genre (see also below), within which my informants would be situated, I have chosen to delineate a fluid ethical realm (DiY).

My third point also relates to the previous two and brings up a difference with regards to the use of 'the local'. The spatialization of music production is evident in both works. Cohen's (1991) fieldwork revolved mainly around a specific studio with which her two case studies were associated. Her account demonstrates a strong identification of music with the city, and the experience of music is presented as part and parcel with the locality. Music had its 'citiness' (Massey cited in Cohen 2007: 2). Cohen describes rock music *in* Liverpool. The fact that she talks about rock *culture* is also telling, because it reveals the situatedness of music action as well as its boundedness (although Cohen does discuss the bands' various trips to London and Manchester in relation to their music activities). Elsewhere, she develops these ideas in greater depth (1994, 1995, 2007).

Similarly, I have remarked on Finnegan's (1989) acknowledgement about the ambiguous nature of 'the local'. Yet, although she devises the notion of urban pathways in order to convey the porous boundaries of places, Finnegan does not directly confront the meaning of locality, neither its significance in bringing about an ethical life. As I have already noted, locality should be perceived as an ethical modality of action and not as a material or symbolic context – less as a bounded space and more as an open-ended

ethical potential and entity. I will seek to restore the analytical and empirical importance of Finnegan's pathways for our understanding of 'local' and urban contexts, as well as urban life in general (Chapters 3 & 6). In order to do so, I will first have to examine the strengths and weaknesses of other available analytical frameworks. The lack of consensus as to which one best captures or represents popular music practices, to some extent seems to draw upon the very same issues surrounding 'the local'. It is these conceptual frameworks to which I now turn.

2.4 From Subcultures to Milieux

Terms such as 'subcultures' (Hebdige 1979), 'worlds' (Becker 1982), 'scenes' (Straw 1991), 'fields' (Bourdieu 1993), 'tribes' or 'neo-tribes' (Bennett 1999b), and 'milieux' (Webb 2004) have all been employed in academic discourse. Scholars have devised or used these concepts in an effort to address the concrete music practices of individuals in real circumstances and actual settings, as well as the wider socio-economic contexts within which music practitioners operate. It should be noted that not all of these frameworks were developed exclusively, or even mainly, for the study of popular music. There is no space here for their thorough examination, but I will provide a general outline of their usefulness and/or inappropriateness for my argument.

I will start by stating that their contribution to our understanding of the relationship between music and social life has been crucial. However, there are inadequacies in all of these approaches and I will therefore organize the discussion around their shortcomings. First, I will consider the concepts that fail to provide a dynamic framework for anthropological analysis. Second, I will examine the ones that demonstrate certain ambiguities in the ways in which they have been taken up in the relevant literature. Finally, I will focus upon the conceptual frameworks that focus upon subjectivity and agency by disregarding how musicians' practices are actually caught up within broader economic and social formations. For the sake of brevity, I will confine my discussion within Bennett's criticisms of subcultures (1999b), Hesmondhalgh's commentary on

subcultures, scenes and tribes (2005), his assessment (2006) and Born's consideration (2010) of Bourdieu's field, Finnegan's critique of art worlds (1989), as well as my own remarks.[36]

The term 'subculture' is mainly associated with research in 'youth cultures' conducted in the 1970s by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCC). Perhaps the most prominent exponent of subcultural theory is Dick Hebdige and his work on post-war white working-class subcultures in the UK. His study focuses on the emergence of punk, which Hebdige perceives as a 'symbolic violation of the social order', an element that constitutes the fundamental characteristic of any subculture (1979: 19). Despite the insightful analysis, the book totally lacks ethnographic data. This does not permit a grounded and nuanced understanding of the ways in which punk emerged and subsequently evolved.

With the exception of Willis (1978), whose *Profane Culture* attempts to account for individuals' agency and creativity in the accumulation of musical taste, subcultural theory in its vaguely Marxist orientation has been preoccupied with structure and particularly class (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 25). The emergence of BCCC research was premised upon the reconsideration of 'deviance' as normal behaviour and embodied a shift from the study of youth gangs – popular in the Chicago School quarters – to the examination of style-related youth cultures (Bennett 1999b: 600).

Working-class youth's resistance towards established social norms was advocated as the very essence of subcultures. However, this idea was based upon the assumption that, instead of consumerism providing youth with the means to transcend class boundaries and articulate different identities, it somehow generated a homogeneous (working-) class-based response. Thus, consumer goods were appropriated and used in order to resist post-war structural changes in Britain (ibid.: 602). Nevertheless, the postulate of resistance as an exclusive privilege of the working classes did not always correspond

[36] See Finnegan for a critique of additional approaches from urban studies (1989: 304-307).

with reality. This is particularly relevant to punk. Hebdige seems to disregard that punk was not an exclusively working-class phenomenon. A final issue, as Bennett notes, is that there has been a distinctive lack of female presence in the subcultural literature.

Despite BCCC's attempts to normalize 'deviance', it failed to go beyond the idea of resistance and, as such, to abolish the distinction between subcultures and the 'mainstream'. This results in the exclusion of dominant or popular cultural forms and essentially places 'subcultures' outside or in opposition to society (Bennett 1999b: 604). Besides, their persistent association with a homogeneous class foreclosed a deeper understanding of the plural ideas and meanings that are associated with youth cultures. Even though the concept of subcultures has survived in the literature (e.g. Hodkinson 2002), its preoccupation with 'style' still precludes the necessary articulation of an analytical argument that takes into account the whole range of overlapping meanings embedded within any 'subcultural' form.

The partiality of focus and the overall lack of ethnographic data, as well as the connotations of rigidity, homogeneity and stability, diminish the concept's capacity to render intelligible the richness of essentially fluid and diverse music practices. According to Hesmondhalgh, 'the CCCS work on youth subcultures was never really about music, it was about youth collectivities that used music, among other means, to construct their identities' (2005: 31). Yet I would add that the problem did not rest upon studying people who used music to form their identities, but that subcultures did not sufficiently foreground the musical dimensions of processes of self-making.

Becker's art worlds (1982), which anticipated Small's 'musicking' (1998), present different but related difficulties. Becker defines art worlds as follows:

> Art worlds consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art. Members of art worlds coordinate the activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artifacts (1982: 34).

Thus, an art world is a social concept – cooperation being integral to its very existence. Despite the constraints imposed on artists, these shared conventions allow for a better coordination of the activities pertinent to artistic production and establish a common vocabulary between cultural producers and audiences that enables art works to exercise emotional effect. These conventions are rigorous but never absolute, as artists can choose whether they will follow them or not (Becker 1982: 29-33). In fact, Becker's concept is sensitive to change and innovation: 'Art worlds...are born, grow, change, and die' (ibid.: 350).

Finnegan observes that art words convey the systematic nature of much musical activity that tends to be perceived as an outgrowth of happenstance (1989: 180). However, she argues that specific characteristics of the term 'world' are problematic (ibid.: 188-189). Its concreteness and absolutism, its autonomy and lack of interaction with other worlds, the connotations of all-inclusiveness, largeness and, finally, the shifting identification of worlds with people and musical styles alike, ultimately render art worlds an insufficient framework.

The third and final concept with structural overtones is Bourdieu's field of cultural production (1993). Although it did not include music and was exclusively focused upon art and literature, Bourdieu's framework has been taken up by scholars writing on popular music (e.g. Moore 2007; O'Connor 2008; Prior 2008). Bourdieu's opus is constructed through the interplay of three of his own core theoretical concepts, namely field, *habitus* and capital. He perceives the field of artistic production as being composed by the subfields of small-scale or 'restricted' production and large-scale production. These are in turn included within the field of power that represents a combination of the economic and political fields, both of which form part of the broader field of class (Bourdieu 1993: 37-39).

What distinguishes the two subfields is their respective degrees of autonomy from the overarching field of power. The more autonomy a subfield gains the more evidently it is

different from the other subfield. In terms of 'capital', the more autonomous the subfield is the more symbolic capital accrues and the less economic. By contrast, lack of autonomy reverses the relationship between symbolic and economic capital. The main differentiating factor between the two subfields is public access (Bourdieu 1993: 39). Thus, an artistic field that is market-driven is a subfield of large-scale production with little autonomy and symbolic capital but substantial economic capital. On the other hand, a specialist artistic or literary field (Bourdieu uses Symbolist poetry as an example) possesses little economic capital but high levels of symbolic capital and autonomy. These two subfields are clearly discrete. When one examines Bourdieu's schema, it becomes clear that he associates cultural production with the dominant class (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 214).

Bourdieu's framework pays a good deal of attention to class and his framework is broader than Becker's. Although elements of the field resemble those of art worlds – self-contained, concrete and autonomous – Bourdieu also accounts for what happens *within* the field and, by implication, *to* it by describing position-takings in what he calls the 'space of possibles' (ibid.: 216; Bourdieu 1993: 30, 61-73). Position-taking is largely but not exclusively determined by one's *habitus* or dispositions that shape these positions, but, rather, these dispositions can be fully realized only in relation to the positions chosen, taken, and retained by an individual (Bourdieu 1993: 71). It follows that *habitus* and positions are mutually constitutive (ibid.: 61). In other words 'possible positions define the thinkable and the unthinkable, the doable and the impossible for agents in the field' and at the same time 'counter naïve notions of creative freedom and innovation' (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 216).

As Born notes, the study of cultural production as the intersection between *habitus* and broader structural currents is a major advancement, while Bourdieu's insistence on the relational qualities of the field softens its rigidity (2010: 7). However, Born also points out that the concept of the field undermines the historical importance of aesthetic traditions. By reducing cultural production to a set of competing power relations,

Bourdieu fails to provide a theory of how aesthetic traditions and art objects inform specific artistic and literary forms. Furthermore, the field does not accommodate for processes of social and cultural transformation, which are evident in the historical trajectories of these traditions. This further weakens Bourdieu's formulation of stability and change within the field, because 'it is only by theorizing diachrony in cultural production that processes of stability and change can be grasped' (Born 2010: 9).[37]

Another point made by Born is that cultural institutions and individual actors are represented as occupying similar positions in Bourdieu's framework, but most important for my discussion here is Born's view on Bourdieu's notion of subjectivity and agency. As a component of the *habitus* agency is enacted and exercised through improvisation and, therefore, it is the only characteristic within Bourdieu's schema that could be held responsible for transformation and change. The concept of improvisation remains underdeveloped though, 'a residual term' that results in a highly deterministic concept of the field, from which subjectivity is excluded (ibid.: 11).[38] While Bourdieu's field would be an ideal site for the consideration of the tension between creativity and commerce, it would do little towards evaluating aesthetic factors, individual sensibilities, and ethical considerations pertinent to music practices. As I shall demonstrate, these sensibilities and considerations should not be conflated with 'agency' (Chapter 6).

The concept of music scenes, as loose aggregations of style, genre and practice, but with spatial coordinates, offers a more dynamic analytical tool. We may trace the emergence of the concept in journalistic discourse during the 1940s, when the term was initially employed in order to describe the bohemian lifestyle of jazz musicians. 'Scenes' have been widely used in the popular press to convey a variety of cultural practices, but they have also become the means to forge and represent collective identifications between

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[37] Born proposes a framework (not specifically for the study of music-based groupings) that she calls 'post-positivist empiricism'.

[38] For a thorough assessment of Born's criticisms, see Prior (2011).

individuals (Bennett & Petterson 2004: 2). In many instances, local authorities have contributed to the reification and romanticization of particular music scenes in order to attract tourism, with the hope of galvanizing their economies (see e.g. Cohen 2007).

Instead of conceiving music practices as fixed in particular locations, music scenes can be seen as cultural spaces that transcend the boundaries of localities to incorporate trajectories that link various centres of music production (Straw 1991: 373-374). While they were initially seen as local, unique and 'authentic', music scenes are now perceived as fluid, global and mobile (Cohen 1999), and occupy local, translocal, as well as virtual spaces (Bennett & Peterson 2004). According to Straw, regional or local scenes cannot provide anymore the necessary dynamic for evolution in musical styles (e.g. Liverpool in the 1960s). Rather, it is the interaction between a multiplicity of localities through 'circuits' of music production that gives rise to contemporary scenes (1991: 378).

As Hesmondhalgh (2005) points out, the term came into academic vogue through Straw's article and Shank's ethnography on the rock'n'roll scene in Austin, Texas (1994). But where Cohen (1999) traces a transition from local and fixed to global and mobile scenes, Hesmondhalgh identifies a contradiction in these two uses of the term and notes that Straw and Shank conceive of 'scenes' in totally different ways (2005: 28). Whereas Shank's approach is rooted within a particular place, Straw argues for the cosmopolitan nature of evolving scenes. Echoing Bourdieu's field, Straw is preoccupied with the broader competing forces and the economic and cultural arena within which music production takes place. By contrast, Shank's concept bears 'subcultural' connotations by virtue of his focus upon the rock'n'roll scene's subversive and transformative qualities.

Apart from Cohen (1999) and other recent attempts (e.g. Bennett 2004; O'Connor 2002), Bennett and Peterson have provided a spatial classification of scenes (2004). They favour the term scene over that of 'subculture' because of the latter's association with deviance from the mainstream, which assumes an opposition towards one,

dominant culture, as well as due to the underlying assumption that subcultures tend to dictate people's lives (Bennett & Peterson 2004: 3). They place their concept of scenes alongside Bourdieu's field (see also Luvaas 2012) and Becker's art worlds, and proceed to review various works that have addressed the concept. Although the spatial metaphor is a useful one – not least for our understanding of the qualitatively different spatialities involved in music-making – the ambiguity of the term, as described above, remains.

The analytical usefulness of 'scenes' derives from their close association with space and place, with situated everyday practices, and with shared values and taste. These latter characteristics are perhaps evident in the identification of music scenes with specific music genres in academic and popular discourse alike. However, the two terms should not be conflated and several scholars have explored the notion of genre (alone or in conjunction with other concepts) by arguing that it could bridge the general and the particular through a consideration of musical styles (e.g. Hesmondhalgh 2005: 32; Holt 2007: 6-7). Music scenes have been employed in the academic literature in various and often conflicting ways. This highlights the problems that arise when a vernacular term that is loaded with diverse meanings is introduced in scholarly discourse. Consequently, music scenes have evolved into a polysemic and expansive, but simultaneously descriptive, vague, and obscuring concept.

In retaining the structure/agency dualism for purpose of clarity, it would seem that the final concepts I will briefly consider attach themselves to the latter category. It is a common trope that late modernity has brought the realization that individual identities are not and should not be considered to be 'given' or 'fixed' but rather as constructed and fluid. Two concepts that address this concern within the context of music practice are Bennett's tribe (1999b) and Webb's milieu (2004). As discussed above, Bennett identifies several issues with the widely used term 'subculture', such as an emphasis upon mass-culture and working-class resistance, as well as upon the exclusion of women.

Reminiscent of the conceptual conundrums present in the concept of scenes, Bennett remarks that subcultural theory lacks objectivity because of the variable ways in which the concept has been employed and due to the rigidity of its assumed social and cultural distinctions (1999b: 605). He adopts a postmodern approach and by building upon Maffesoli's *tribus* (1996) Bennett suggests that the articulation of contemporary identities occurs within the realms of consumerism and lifestyle, both of which reflect the contingent, fluid nature of collectivities. For Bennett, lifestyle incorporates individual choices and 'patterns of consumption' as 'personal expression' (Bennett 1999b: 607).

But Bennett's tribes, in their individualized freedom and in their capacity to choose their identities from the 'cultural supermarket' (Mathews 1996: 723), are a poignant glorification of consumerism (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 25). Besides, the use of the term 'tribe' is misplaced as well as opposed to Bennett's main point, conveying strong associations with rootedness and boundedness, while simultaneously ascribing a sense of primitivism onto recent occurrences (ibid. 24). His definition of agency as individualized consumption is also exclusive, because the ability to consume is dependent upon various different external factors (ibid.: 25). The almost solipsistic nature of Bennett's tribalism disregards the forceful, intersubjective and structural levels of identity formation. His attempt echoes real concerns about the inadequacy of a singular focus on structure but 'tribes' seem to sit uncomfortably with broader accounts.

Webb goes some way towards bridging that gap. The milieu concept resembles Bourdieu's *habitus* (1977, 1990) as Webb admits (2004: 31). However, according to Webb, milieu is 'much more nuanced' and 'it develops a number of different areas of understanding' (ibid.) – though he does not make clear which 'areas' he means. Webb, who borrows the concept from Durrschmidt (2000), explains that milieu:

> [W]ould more fully encapsulate the dynamic, fluid and changing nature of particular types of music making and associations with it and would reflect the

> networks of interaction, production, and influence that music makers and actors in the particular music "scenes" are involved in (2004: 29-30).

Also, it would illuminate:

> [T]he notion of a network and when used as a framework for researching the way in which particular networks of people and music cultures interact, also situates those activities in the wider cultural complex that they are developing within (ibid.: 30).

Finally, milieu:

> [C]an be thought of as a concept that articulates a set of overlapping levels of meaning, relevance, disposition, and understanding. It then tries to illuminate the complex development of types of cultural activity within the stock of knowledge of an individual operating within a social grouping or number of groupings (ibid.).

Thus, Webb's emphasis on texture and different levels of understanding provides a framework that is useful to conceptualize ethnographically interesting questions that deal with individual and collective everyday musical activities. Webb's elaborated version of the milieu situates it within Bourdieu's field. On a third level, both the music milieu and the field of cultural production are constantly interacting with other milieux in a metaphorical, dialectical relationship (ibid.: 36-38). For instance, we may think other music milieux and their impact on the aesthetic perceptions of a specific milieu. Similarly, individuals' family and workplace milieux can be seen as being interrelated with their respective musical milieux.

However, Webb's framework does not seem to suggest a qualitative difference to the *habitus* and its role within Bourdieu's field. The difference here is one of degree, not kind. Webb's intention is to at once adopt a more nuanced and grounded perspective of agency *and* describe the wider economic and cultural arena within which actors are situated. Nevertheless, Webb neither escapes the same sort of criticisms expressed towards the field, nor does he provide a theory of agency that would form the middle-ground between Bennett's fragmented identities and Bourdieu's structured and structuring dispositions.

At stake in the concepts examined in this section is a delicate balance between accounting for the intimate and the familiar while addressing the more formal and abstract dynamics that inform everyday conduct. The ways in which everyday life is framed by the intimidating forces of a globalized economy and transnational connections lie at the heart of such considerations. It is at the places where these intersect that an anthropology of music should penetrate. These junctures are neither static nor ceaselessly mobile. Similarly, individual subjects are neither 'integrated' nor 'fragmented' (Strauss 1997). They might exhibit what Rosaldo has termed 'multiplex subjectivity' (cited in Narayan 1993: 676), or, as I prefer to call it, ethical complexity (Faubion 2011). Yet these identities are realized and enacted in particular settings and through specific *practices.* By imposing abstract models 'anthropologists run the danger of caricaturing complex realities, neglecting key realms of experience, and missing lived ironies and singularities that might complicate and enrich analytics' (Biehl & Locke 2010: 319).

The frameworks considered above do not sufficiently address the quotidian nature of musical activity, that is, how and, crucially, *why* actors become involved in music practices. These concepts fail to convey the overlapping and cross-cutting ideas, practices, affects and symbolic meanings, but also the structural logics, patterns and norms that encompass music in-the-making.[39] Only by attending to the particular may we meaningfully consider its relationship with more intangible aspects at higher levels of abstraction.

Therefore, in the remainder of the thesis I turn to Finnegan's 'pathways' (1989) in order to address the aspects missed by other approaches. Similarly, I refer to the collective (but by no means homogeneous) identification of individuals with DiY practice as comprising a 'network' (occasionally it appears as 'cohort', 'group' or 'circuit'). I should emphasize that I do not use 'network' to designate or foreground the structural

[39] The *habitus* is clearly Bourdieu's attempt to go beyond the structure/agency dualism. However, the *habitus* ultimately refers back to the social determinism from which it emanates (de Certeau 1984: 56-60; Farnell 2000).

properties of DiY, even those that do not imply determinism (see Crossley 2008). Nor do I treat networks as human/non-human assemblages (Latour 2005), though I consider this possibility in relations to ethics (Chapter 6). Similarly, in focusing exclusively upon human actors, I am not concerned here – in the way that Crossley is with doing in the early punk 'movement' – with drawing a chart or 'family tree' of actors and bands within the DiY network (e.g. Figure 2.1).

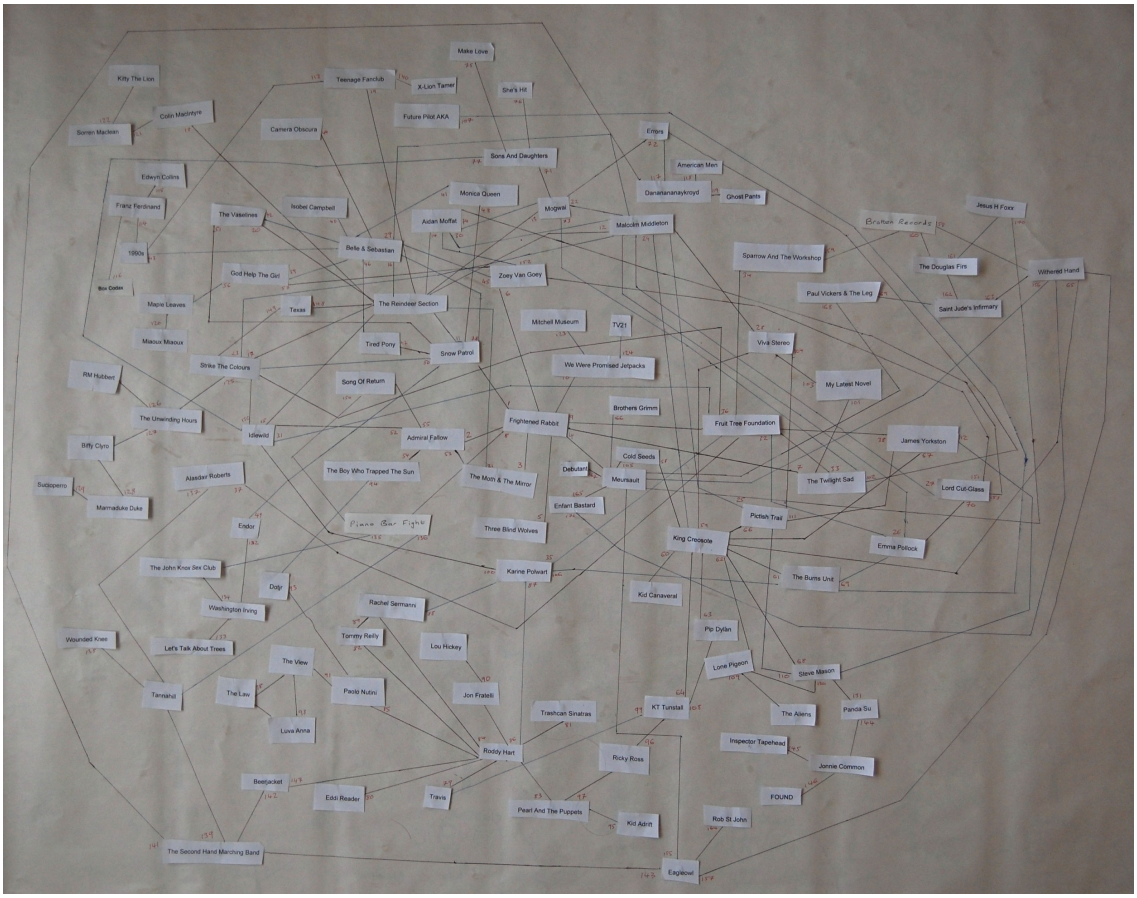

Figure 2.1: 'Family tree' of Scottish musicians.[40]

Along with musicological analysis, social network analysis is relevant to this thesis, but falls outside its scope. The notion of a network resonates with my topic through its revelation of a *sense* of connectedness between different subjects, without obscuring

[40] Retrieved from http://thepopcop.co.uk/2010/11/family-tree-of-scottish-musicians/ [Accessed 12 November 2012].

individual contributions and differences, or confining these connections to a specific place, local or virtual (e.g. Chapter 3). In employing the term, I draw attention to the open-ended nature and multiplicity of relationships and affiliations between actors engaging in music practices. Thus, my use of networks is closer to a 'rhizomatic' approach (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). In contrast with the term 'scene', I consider an advantage the fact that 'networks' have been and still are widely used outside academic discourse. Put more crudely, I use the notion of networks as people in everyday life do, and as my informants did. Importantly, networks avoid the connotations of rootedness and consensus, embedded in terms such as 'culture' or 'society', but still retain the complexity and intersubjective character of musical and ethical action. The following section seeks to establish what such ethical action might entail.

2.5 Music Practice as Ethics

To say that there has been a recent resurgence of interest in ethics within anthropology would be an understatement. Anthropology has not been unique in its preoccupation with the ethical, forming part of a wider postwar turn to ethics in the humanities and social sciences (e.g. Garber *et al* 2000). The development of ethics as a distinctive field of inquiry within the discipline currently stands on shifting ground and, therefore, any attempt to account for its scope or to outline its specificity is like trying to hit a moving target. However, the recent bourgeoning interest had various precedents.[41]

Nevertheless, these earlier, pioneering works did not manage to spur theoretical debate or set an intellectual agenda for the comparative study of ethics. Efforts outside the discipline to establish ethnographically an ethical field of inquiry have been similarly unproductive (Laidlaw 2010a: 369). This has rapidly changed over the last decade, after the publication of certain landmark contributions (Faubion 2001a; Laidlaw 2002;

[41] Early contributions include Burridge (1960, 1969), Edel & Edel (1959), Firth (1951, 1953), Fürer-Haimendorf (1967), Gluckman (1972), Read (1955), Vogt & Albert (1966) and Westermarck (1932). For more recent works, see Fiske and Mason (1990), Fortes (1987), Howell (1997), Parish (1994), Parkin (1985), Overing (1985), Parry and Bloch (1989), Pocock (1986) and Wolfram (1982). Zigon (2008) provides an overview of an impressive variation of relevant ethnographic works.

Lambek 2000). The sheer volume and variety of anthropological works and approaches currently available attests to that.[42]

Despite all of this, one could argue that given the intricate accounts of social customs and norms that one encounters in countless monographs, anthropologists have been studying ethics all along. However, this has been precisely part of the problem that inhibited the delineation of a separate conceptual space for the analysis of the ethical dimension of human life, something that was variably recognized early on (Edel & Edel, 1959: 7; Parkin, 1985: 4-5; Pocock 1986: 8; Wolfram 1982: 268). Laidlaw (2002) and subsequent others have identified Durkheim's conflation of morality with society as an important reason for the paucity in the literature and the long overdue development of an anthropology of ethics (see also Faubion 2011; Lambek 2010a; Robbins 2004, 2007; Widlok 2004; Zigon 2007).

As Laidlaw shows (2002: 312-315), for Durkheim society is dependent upon moral dictates that individuals tend to follow and moral norms are incorporated by and stem from society, which is perceived as an assemblage of 'moral facts' (1953 [1906]). The idea that morality directly derives from society is evident according to Durkheim in that 'the greater the strength of the group structure, the more numerous are the moral rules appropriate to it' (1957 [1937]: 7). But the various facets of moral discipline and obligation are not only experienced as 'duty'. Durkheim contends that, because people are products of society, moral norms are also appealing to individuals (1953 [1906]: 36-7, 44-7). Sexual, professional, as well as state morals, all emanate from and reflect society (1957 [1937]). In essence, Durkheim's formulation, which is explicitly geared towards critiquing and replacing Kantian rationalism with an 'empirical' explanation, eliminates the element of freedom and choice that was central in Kant (1998 [1785]).

[42] Faubion (2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2011), Laidlaw (1995, 2002, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) and Lambek (2000, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011) have all been instrumental in the development of an anthropology of ethics. Other significant contributions include Fassin's 'moral anthropology' (2008, 2011, 2012; Fassin & Lézé 2013), Robbins's 'anthropology of morality' (2004, 2007, 2009, 2012) and Zigon's 'anthropology of moralities' (2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a). Further important works include Al-Mohammad and Peluso (2012), Heintz (2009), Lakoff and Collier (2004), Sykes (2009) and Widlok (2004).

However, Kant's universal and disembodied reasoning subject and his stress on moral obligations or categorical imperatives mediated through rational choice conjure up an already narrow conception of ethical life. In battling Kant's deontology, Durkheim's proposition and his:

> [V]ision of human life, which simply lacks ethical complexity, dilemma, reasoning, decision, and doubt, does not constitute an advance. It is not just that this kind of sociology is a charter for authoritarian corporatism, though that is also true. The relevant point is that it is impossible...to see how specifically ethical considerations might be distinguishable from the other causal factors that make the bits of the system – the people – function as they do (Laidlaw 2002: 315).

Therefore, considering the central position of morality in Durkheim's view of society, one would expect that ethics would be a central concern within anthropology. However, in conflating the moral with the social realm, Durkheim's ideas hindered any attempts towards an explicit study of ethical behaviour as a discrete empirical and analytical domain. By restricting morality within a sense of social obligation, Durkheim limited considerably the possibilities and complexities of ethical life. Several scholars have remarked that, although a full-fledged anthropology of ethics has not yet existed, there are various early examples that were not seized by Durkheim's reductive conception.

The work of Mary Douglas is one such example (Faubion 2011: 11; Lambek 2010a: 12). In a slightly different vein, Widlok refers to Durkheim's view that certain important social customs, such as inheritance, are actually immoral, although Durkheim postulated that 'if all social customs are not moral, all moral behavior is customary behavior' (cited in Widlok 2004: 55). Robbins refrains from conceiving Durkheim's moral facts and ethical freedom as mutually exclusive, instead highlighting their complementarity (2007: 300; see also Yan 2011).

Moving away from Durkheim, the description of 'local moralities' (e.g. Beidelman 1971; Campbell 1964; Evans-Pritchard 1937, 1956; Howell 1997; James 1988;

Lienhardt 1961),[43] but especially the Boasian strand (e.g. Boas 1928; Benedict 1935, 1967 [1946]; Herskovits 1948, 1972; Mead 1928), embedded the discussion of ethics within a relativistic framework that further stalled a concerted approach (see Fassin 2008; Heintz 2009; Laidlaw 2002, 2010a; Lambek 2010a; Zigon 2008).[44] Understanding the ethical domain as a series of homogeneous cultural idiosyncrasies will not get us far; on the other hand, the universalism of abstract ethical reasoning fails to address ethics from a grounded perspective. Therefore, the empirical examination of ethics cannot not presuppose that culture, society and ethics coincide. Instead, it perceives the latter as being constitutive of the former and that ethics exhibits considerable diversity and complexity. In turn, this may require the reconsideration of basic social-scientific conceptual tenets, such as structure, agency, society and culture (Laidlaw 2010a, 2010b).

The recognition that the 'ethical turn' in anthropology aims to transcend some basic and long-standing hindrances to its development needs to be further alert to the semantic variation (and confusion) that has been inherited by moral philosophy, where ethical inquiry has a long history.[45] I cannot survey here the full extent of this terminological morass, but a few examples suffice to demonstrate (rather than clarify) this problem. Laidlaw, following Nietzsche (1998 [1887]) and Williams (1985), defines moralities as 'ethical systems where self-denying values inform law-like obligations' (2002: 317). Thus, the ethical encompasses morality, which forms only one out of many possible sets

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[43] Various edited collections with a regional ethnographic focus but without a particularistic view of ethics have appeared recently. See, for example, Barker (2007), Pandian and Ali (2010), Stafford (2013) and Zigon (2011a).

[44] For more recent but similarly attuned contributions, see Cook (1999), Geertz (1984), Hatch (1983) and Shweder (1989). The persistence of relativism is exemplified in a paradox mentioned by Laidlaw (2002: 327, 2010a: 372), according to which, in postulating 'the primacy of the ethical', Nancy Scheper-Hughes almost simultaneously critiqued (1995) and embraced (2000) relativism.

[45] As Lambek (2010a), among others (Faubion 2001a; Laidlaw 2002; Widlok 2004), has noted, the emergent 'ethical turn' in anthropology should be informed and will benefit from a constant dialogue with philosophy. An ethnographically-grounded (and thus more pragmatic) anthropological approach does not have to exclude or defend (as often philosophers do) specific and often conflicting philosophical substrata. Ethics is an essentially intersubjective affair, but not a set of social obligations in the Durkheimian sense. Therefore, anthropology has a distinctive task to confront the subjective nature of ethics widely present in moral philosophy (Faubion 2011: 56-57).

of values and actions. Zigon places ethics in the moment that emerges after what he calls a 'moral breakdown', and he defines 'morality as the unreflective mode of being-in-the-world and ethics as a tactic performed in the moment of the breakdown of the ethical dilemma' (2007: 138).

By contrast, Faubion, whose arguments I examine in Chapter 5, does not perceive the two as mutually exclusive. He resists the conceptualization of everyday life as unreflective, retains the totality of the ethical domain to which morality is internal and renames the latter as the 'themitical'. In doing so, Faubion seeks to convey the normativity of the moral order by avoiding the semantic confusion that arises from the myriad connotations associated with 'morality' (2011: 20, 24). Lambek's suggestion is to treat ethics and morality as interchangeable (2010a: 9), because maintaining an inconsistent distinction is confusing as well as inhibitive to the creative appropriation of ideas and insights from relevant scholarship. He adds, however, that ethics is preferable due to its prominence in moral philosophy and its association with practice and the 'good', rather than propriety and the 'right'.

I endorse this second point fully and, in part, this is how I have and will refer to ethics in the remainder of the thesis. Due to the ambiguity of the term ethical (indicating a 'field' as well as a positive dimension of action), here, too, 'the reader has to exercise some discernment' (Lambek 2010a: 9). I further embrace Lambek's designation of ethics as 'ordinary', in the sense that 'the ordinary is intrinsically ethical and ethics intrinsically ordinary (ibid.: 3). But I also retain the relationship between ethics and morality (or the 'themitical'), in the spirit of Laidlaw (2002) and Faubion's (2011) formulations.

In a nutshell, I reserve the term ethical to indicate the variegated practices and judgements pertinent to music-making. I perceive music as a site for self-cultivation and formation, in which my informants strived for 'excellence' or 'the good': '[T]hat at which human beings characteristically aim' (MacIntyre 1981: 148). Some of these

music practices are seen as moral or 'themitical' due to their normative nature but also because of the connotations of 'right' or 'wrong' that accompanied and characterized certain behaviours. My purpose is not to provide a solution at the level of definition and this would not make much sense ethnographically. Nevertheless, I hope that thus articulated my use of these terms provides a useful compass for the reader to navigate what follows.

In turning from moral obligation to ethics as Aristotelian practice (2009 [1980]), my treatment of music-making as virtuous conduct and self-cultivation derives respectively from the ideas of MacIntyre (1981) and Foucault (1982, 1985, 1986, 1997, 2005). Aristotle conceived ethics as an intrinsic property of action and not thought, and distinguished between three types of human activities: *praxis* (doing), *poiêsis* (making) and *theoria* (thought). What I take from Macintyre is a conception of practice in which means and ends [*telos*] are conjoined (Chapters 3 & 6) – what Aristotle would term *energeia* and what Arendt calls 'actuality' (1998 [1958]: 206). From Foucault's writings on ethics I embrace the link between ethics and 'freedom' (Chapter 6),[46] and that various practices or 'techniques of the self' represent forms of self-fashioning and the means by which actors gradually become ethical subjects (Chapters 4 & 5). In other words, and contrary to Aristotle's conviction, I treat ethics as *poiêsis* and not merely a form of 'doing' [*praxis*] (see Faubion 2001a, 2011).

Foucault distinguished moral precepts from ethics, which he called 'the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself' [*rapport à soi*], which is expressed in how individuals constitute themselves as ethical subjects (1997: 263). Foucault's techniques or technologies of the self allow us to ethnographically attend to how freedom is exercised cross-culturally and to the bodily practices pertinent to ethical cultivation. Crucially, his idea of ethical freedom offers the opportunity to challenge a particular and

[46] The link between ethics and freedom echoes Kant's influence on Foucault (Hacking 2002: 115-120; cf. Faubion 2011: 38-39, 50-51).

prevalent conception of agency in social theory (Keane 2003; Laidlaw 2002, 2010b; see also Chapter 6).

Of course, I am not alone in tackling these arguments. MacIntyre's idea of goods internal to practices has been addressed elsewhere (e.g. Widlok 2004; see also Laidlaw 2010a: 372-373; Lambek 2010a: 21-23). Foucault's schema of ethical self-cultivation has made an impact upon an impressive array of ethnographic topics and has variably influenced several recent approaches (e.g. Asad 1993; Candea 2010; Daston & Galison 2007; Faubion 2001a, 2001b, 2011; Fischer 2003; Howell 1997; Humphrey 1997; Laidlaw 2002; Pandian 2008a; Rabinow 1996). His ideas are also echoed or directly taken up in a range of notable ethnographic monographs that grapple with ethical projects.[47]

Despite the thematic pluralism, there is no work engaging directly with music. This is strange, because several important figures writing on ethics have alluded to the ways in which music and sound could be related to ethics but also how music practices *exemplify* central ideas and paradoxes about ethical cultivation. Thus, Mahmood (2005: 29) notes that 'docility' as an ethical stance can be best understood through the example of a painful training regime, which a pianist undergoes in order to excel in his or her practice (Chapter 4). Lambek (2010a: 21-22) contends that one practice where MacIntyre's (1981) internal goods are readily observable is that of music and specifically when one plays for the inherent pleasure involved, rather than to achieve goals external to the practice (Chapter 6). Finally, Hirschkind (2006) skillfully demonstrates how auditory aesthetics, vocal harmonies and the affective qualities of sound are intrinsic characteristics of ethical cultivation in the context of sermon-listening.

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[47] Themes range from religion (Cook 2010; Faubion 2001c; Hirschkind 2006; Laidlaw 1995; Lester 2005; Mahmood 2005), history (Lambek 2003), motherhood and reproduction (Paxson 2004), mental illness (Davis 2012), suffering (Throop 2010) and HIV (Zigon 2011b), to cultural change (Robbins 2004), postcolonialism (Pandian 2009) and postsocialism (Zigon 2010b).

To reiterate, my purpose here is not to offer an additional set of definitions or a novel approach. Rather, my aim is to enrich the ethnographic repertoire of technologies of self-cultivation and to bring attention to music practice as an ethical practice. I also wish to examine the potential to ethnographically address concerns that are of particular interest to an anthropology of ethics.[48]

Both Foucault and MacIntyre ground their ideas on specific practices. If an anthropology of ethics ought to be rooted in ethnographically observable practices (Faubion 2011: 93-94), then why not endorse Bourdieu's theory of practice (1977, 1990)? Part of the reason lies in my discussion above with regards to the confinement of 'agency' in Bourdieu's 'field', which renders it overly deterministic. Another reason is that Bourdieu is not preoccupied with ethics but with strategic calculation, competition and domination. His actors strive exclusively for goods external to their practices (Lambek 2010a: 21). As Lambek notes elsewhere, practical judgement ('wisdom' or 'temperance' [*phronêsis*]) involves *good* judgement: 'Ethics in Aristotle is not something you apply but how you act. And it is not a matter of *what* you do – its specific content – but a matter of acting well' (2000: 316).

Rather than the unconscious embodiment and reproduction of social structure, ethics – for Foucault at least – is the *conscious* practice of freedom (1997: 284). Ethical practice encapsulates *primarily* the possibility of change (Faubion 2011: 45-46). In adapting *habitus* from Aristole, Bourdieu retains the durability of dispositions, which, once acquired, become part of the *habitus* (Chapter 6). However, he eliminates the pedagogical aspect present in Aristotle's conception and central to ethical cultivation (Chapter 5). In other words, Bourdieu's impressive work lacks an account of the explicit ways in which the *habitus* is learned (Mahmood 2005: 138-139). The Aristotelian master virtue of *phronêsis* is a sense of balance in life or the 'middle ground' between opposing extremes. This indicates that the exercise of practical judgement and the

[48] I prefer this designation over others, such as anthropology of morality/moralities, moral anthropology, and so on. The intrinsically ordinary nature of ethics as a modality of human action reflects the fact that the ethical need not necessarily be a separate, sub-disciplinary 'field'.

dispositional nature of ethical *praxis* necessarily involve a pragmatic synthesis of unconscious habit and self-interest (Lambek 2000: 316, 2010a: 22-23). In other words, ethics requires us to rethink the distinction between structure and agency, in which 'practice theory' is embedded (Chapter 6).

What for Bourdieu comes as an already formed unconscious habit, for Aristotle is formed and acquired through habitual practice: '[M]oral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (*êthikê*) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word *ethos* [*ἔθος*] (habit)' (Aristotle 2009 [1980]: 23). Hence my use of *êthos* and not *ethos* in order to convey the dispositions acquired through habituated *but* ethically-charged practices. Again, this does not offer a clarification (see Faubion 2011: 38).[49] However, it is consonant with how DiY 'ethos' and 'ethic' were used by my informants and are used in popular discourse ('good' rather than merely 'habit'). *Êthos* further avoids the connotations of a codified, professional 'ethic' (Chapter 3). My use of the term is consonant with Foucault's ethical schema stemming from his treatise of ancient Greek ethics:

> [E]thical in the sense in which the Greeks understood it: êthos was a way of being and of behavior. It was a mode of being for the subject, along with a certain way of acting, a way visible to others. A person's êthos was evident in his clothing, appearance, gait, in the calm with which he responded to every event, and so on. For the Greeks, this was the concrete form of freedom; this was the way they problematized their freedom. A man possessed of a splendid êthos, who could be admired and put forward as an example, was someone who practiced freedom in a certain way. I don't think that a shift is needed for freedom to be conceived as êthos; it is immediately problematized as êthos. But extensive work by the self on the self is required for this practice of freedom to take shape in an êthos that is good, beautiful, honorable, estimable, memorable, and exemplary...Êthos also implies a relationship with others (1997: 286-287).

A DiY *êthos* encompasses the intersubjective nature of music-making as ethical cultivation, while emphasizing the role of ethical exemplars and pedagogy (Faubion 2001a, 2011; Foucault 1997: 298-299). It also points to the internal virtuous dispositions, capacities and sensibilities acquired through external practices and

[49] *Êthos* is synonym to the Latin *mos*, from which 'morality' derives.

comportment (Mahmood 2005). It avoids the association of ethical action with 'right' or 'wrong', retains the meaning of an *êthos* that is 'good' and highlights that its essence is the object of constant scrutinization, formation and reformation.

Foucault does not claim that we have to substitute ancient ethics for our current condition (1997: 261). However, a historical overview of ideas about ethics can help us expose contradictions in contemporary ethics, as well as its intimate relation with the ancient *êthos*. This, as Bernard Williams has shown (1993), is not that different from our 'own' and especially the conception of responsibility (see also Chapter 6). What has changed is the way in which subjects historically have fashioned themselves: from 'an aesthetics of existence' – revolving around the 'care of the self' [*souci de soi*] that engenders a splendid *êthos* – to a 'hermeneutics of the subject' (Foucault 1985, 1986, 1997, 2005). The latter is associated with the obligation 'to know oneself' [*se connaître*], and with inward self-examination and asceticism (as exemplified in the tradition of Christian morality). This shift is reflected upon the evolving variation of the technologies of the self that people have historically employed in becoming ethical subjects (Foucault 1997: 223-251).

The association of ethics with the freedom of the subject to become the person he or she wishes to be should not be seen as a capacity for radical self-determination. Technologies of the self are predicated upon both reflexive and pedagogical registers (Faubion 2011), and for Foucault there is always a certain obligation to 'truth' in taking up techniques of self-formation (Laidlaw 2002: 324). As I will further elaborate in the chapters that follow, freedom (Chapter 6), technologies of the self (Chapters 4 & 5), and virtuous practice *tout court* (Chapter 3), belong to the domain of the intersubjective. Foucault's ethical schema, with certain adjustments (Faubion 2011), is consonant with the observation that an ethnographic perspective on ethics should be pertinent to both collective considerations as well as individual concerns (Lakoff & Collier 2004: 429). This also recasts freedom as a condition of the ordinary and not the extraordinary, of

continuous ethical thought and practice and not only of periods of conflict between different value complexes (Robbins 2004, 2007, 2012).

This ongoing practice of freedom also questions Zigon's distinction between the ethical moment and the unthinking manner in which subjects, as he claims, live most of the time (2007, 2008). Not only does his formulation bring us back to Bourdieu's *habitus* (see Laidlaw 2009, 2010a), but it further denies the possibility of ethical practice being informed by and taking place in relation to moral or 'themitical' regimes (Faubion 2011). As I argued above (see also Chapter 6), we cannot retain such rigid distinctions if we wish to ethnographically describe the dynamics of ethical action. Ethics dwells in the interpenetration and continuous movement between 'conscious' work on the self and 'unconscious' habitual practices, and between affective sedimentations and mindful responses (Chapter 4).

In light of this, I do not endorse Zigon's viewpoint that anthropological approaches to ethics fall broadly under two categories influenced by relevant philosophical strands: '[T]he moral reasoning and choice approach' and a virtue ethics based upon a 'Neo-Aristotelian and Foucauldian approach' (2007: 133). According to Zigon, the second approach considers the cultivation of dispositional ethical capacities and *not* the possibility of actors becoming ethical subjects by following norms (cf. Mahmood 2005). The aforementioned relation between conscious ethical practice, pedagogy and unconscious habit renders this statement problematic. Such a view assumes that Neo-Aristotelian or Foucauldian ethics are only self-taught, which is false (Faubion 2011: 86).

For similar reasons, I keep at arm's length the otherwise productive debates between phenomenological approaches and theoretical contributions sensitive to the structural constraints in which ethical subjects find themselves (Robbins 2009; Zigon 2009a, 2009b). Nor do I hold that, as opposed to a first-person phenomenological or existentialist understanding of the self as 'given', the post-structuralist view of the self

as something to be created, cultivated and fashioned promotes an anti-humanist or posthumanist understanding of ethics (Mattingly 2012). I do argue, with Laidlaw (2010b), that 'agency' should be seen as distributed and relational, without embracing an anti-humanist ethics that fails to account for ethical responsibility (Chapter 6). I also believe that Foucault's ethical formulation should be adjusted along the lines of Faubion's schema (2011) in order to accommodate the consideration of ethical judgements, without dissolving the ethical into personal opinion – what MacIntyre has called 'emotivism' (1981: 11-12).

The Aristotelian virtue ethics could be exemplified by the virtuous 'balance' of *phronêsis* attained through careful practical judgement. According to Lambek, judgement entails specific criteria, some of which are solid and unchanging, other of which are contingent, while others depend on their reproduction through ritual means, thus allowing space for their transformation (2010b: 43-44). It follows that judgement is not as 'free' as reason was for Kant, while, as Lambek himself contends, the very capacity to make judgements presupposes at least some degree of freedom (2010a: 20). Therefore, instead of perceiving judgement and its ability to mediate between moral obligation and ethical freedom as the *sine qua non* of ethical action, I treat freedom, after Foucault, as an absolutely necessary – but by no means sufficient – condition for the exercise of judgement and ethics in general (Chapter 6).

2.6 Making Music, Selves and Cities

In this chapter I attempted to paint in broad strokes and lay the groundwork for the conceptual apparatus that I will employ in Part II & III. I began by identifying a general lack of anthropological interest in music-making as a field of ethnographic investigation, a dearth partly due to disciplinary boundaries and the erroneous conviction that anthropology has not much to offer to (nor to gain from) the cross-cultural study of music. I proceeded to review the relevant literature by paying attention to works that have informed my approach. In doing so, I foregrounded the quantitatively

limited but invaluable and far-reaching contributions of anthropologists working in this field, and how insights derived from ethnographic approaches in related disciplines can overall strengthen an anthropological approach to music. The lack of a concerted and sustained approach has been further hindered by a glaring gap in the ethnographic literature between music and ethics – both within and outside of anthropology.

From the examination of particular ethnographic examples I attempted to tease out the conceptual elements that will enable me to reveal the particularities of music-making, as well as its broader resonance for the locality and the lives of my informants. I suggested that the notion of 'the local' as a bounded geographical entity fails to address the ways in which music is practiced across time and space. Instead, I argued that the idea of urban musical routes or 'pathways' seems to provide a useful metaphor for an ethnographic study that seeks to demonstrate the fluidity of music practices that take place today in urban environments. How to define or 'catch' the local appears as a central problem in various conceptualizations of music collectivities and their representations. Some of these frameworks have the capacity to elucidate broader domains that affect music-making, but to do so has been to the detriment of lived experience and its ethical dimension that should be continuously realized *in* action.

In shifting from the consideration of the ways in which networks of music practitioners produce meaning to how actors become ethical subjects, I encountered the reverse problem, namely that the burgeoning anthropological interest in ethics has excluded music from its ethnographic horizons. With the exception of Hirschkind's ethnography of sermon-listening in Cairo (which as I have noted in the introduction cannot be defined as 'music'), and despite the recurring links between music practice and virtuous action in the literature, an ethnographic approach is still yet to be realized.

My consideration of relevant works in the emerging anthropology of ethics highlighted that ethnography in ethics should be based upon the examination of concrete practices, rather than abstract reasoning or moral values and obligations. The focus should be on

how actors become ethical subjects through training themselves in relation to and in spite of normative or moral 'rules'. The Aristotelian tradition of ethics as practice is instructive for an anthropology of ethics, as is Macintyre's focus on specific virtuous practices. Foucault has provided an explicit way for anthropologists to study ethical practices through his concept of technologies of the self. In grounding my subsequent ethnographic analysis in music practices as processes of self-cultivation, I seek to partly address the identified gap in the literature. By blending the study of music and ethics, I also hope to enrich the anthropological record of technologies of subject-formation.

In doing so, I intend to go beyond the suggestion that music is simply an additional way of ethnographically studying ethics. My aim is to attend to how music can uniquely contribute to our understanding of how ethical subjects come to be formed. This process of *poiêsis* necessarily involves the relation between music and the subject in its totality, and the subjects' relation to their bodies, others and their surroundings. A 'musical' approach to ethics demands attention to the sensory regimes and affective registers through which music interacts with human bodies and induces ethical sensibilities (Chapter 4). It further requires the examination of how subjects-in-the-making gradually become *localized* through repetitive practices and the embodiment of the ethical modality of 'the local' (Chapter 6). Locality itself should be continuously enacted, formed and reformed through practice.

As Lefebvre reminds us in *The Production of Space* (1991), we should attend not to the 'giveness' of space but to the processes through which it is produced, lived and transformed. As Lefebvre also reminds us, exercising the right to the city (1996, 2003) involves the *use* of urban spaces. This is achieved through social practice [*praxis*]: the production, reproduction and appropriation of spaces, artefacts, as well as social relations (ibid. 2002: 232-244). As Lefebvre further argues, only when repetitive action [*praxis*] becomes 'inventive', that is, a creation [*poiêsis*], can the city be reinvented and recreated as an *oeuvre* (1996: 87). Lefebvre thus provides us a way to examine not only how subjects cultivate themselves in space or *with* space, but also how the cultivation *of*

space through music practice emerges as a distinctive urban ethical practice (Chapter 3). His ideas help to bring into focus the ways in which people make and remake cities through making themselves, and vice versa.

In light of this, the right to the city should be perceived as an ethical right: not a quasi-legal right, nor one 'invested in the stable certainties of identity, but rather in the *potential* of individuals to realize an ethical self from a host of presubjective possibilities' (Baxstrom 2008: 6). Lefebvre notes that the bewildering passivity of 'users' – of urban dwellers who are affected by the current state of cities – is due to the long history of delegating interests to representatives, decision-makers and skilled experts (2003: 187-188). What happens when skills do not come as a package of rules or form a privilege of experts, but are embedded within ongoing urban practices that cannot be reified or qualified by a specific 'design'? What forms of 'politics' are encapsulated in such immanent practice (Chapter 6)? With these questions in mind I now turn to the ethnographic examination of the three music actors.

Part II

Becoming Ethical Subjects

Chapter 3: Winning Sperm Party

3.1 Urban Rhythms and Musical Pathways

I had been in touch with Colin several times since Alistair from *Divorce* (Chapter 4) and Stuart from *Cry Parrot* (Chapter 5) had each suggested that *Winning Sperm Party* (hereafter WSP) were highly relevant to my research. Colin was slow to reply to my emails. When he did reply a few weeks later he invited me to one of their events at the CCA,[50] but I had already planned to attend another gig at the 13th Note that evening,[51] at which Barry would perform solo as *Tangles*. Nevertheless, I decided to drop in early and meet them, even if it was to be brief.

When I arrived at the Centre the allocated room was locked. A young man came to unlock the door. I had spotted him several times at previous DiY events. When I asked him about Colin, he replied, while we were entering the room: 'Oh yes, Colin told me about you. There's four of us'. This was Peter who introduced me to another young man, Corey, who was standing behind a table with the bands' merchandise, and we all walked towards a small kitchen at the side of the stage. There, Colin was standing in front of a large pan containing a boiling yellowish soup. He was cooking for the bands in tonight's line-up. Iain, the fourth member, was missing. After a brief introduction regarding my – at the time – rather ambitious fieldwork plans we arranged a meeting for the following week.

This chapter traces the collective's trajectory from its beginnings in Stirling to the end of my fieldwork. WSP started off as an online blog and subsequently evolved into a record label and a live music promoter. The driving force behind the consolidation of

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[50] The Centre of Contemporary Arts is situated on Sauchiehall Street.

[51] Bar, restaurant and music venue on King Street opposite Mono (Chapter 5) and very close to Transmission (Chapter 1). Mono was owned by Simon and it housed Monorail, a popular independent record shop (Chapter 1). Simon owned several music venues across the city, including Stereo on Renfield Lane and The Flying Duck on Renfield Street.

their practice was their multiple band membership, which had resulted in an array of affiliations with other local musicians. Before moving to Glasgow, music-making had emerged out of necessity in the absence of other forms of interesting recreational activities.[52] But the collective's practice was not just a 'hobby'. Following Finnegan, who treats all of her informants equally as 'musicians' (1989: 18), I argue that discourses of amateurism and professionalism are insufficient for grasping the nature of WSP practice. In rejecting the current terminology, I highlight the ethical qualities of commitment and acknowledgement (Lambek 2010b), by arguing that these offer an alternative framework for understanding the intrinsic ethical characteristics that pervade 'professional' conduct.

The fact that materialism was subservient to an ethics of care and attention indicates a different form of professionalism defined by a degree of dedication and effort that the concept of 'work' or, following Arendt, 'labour' (1998 [1958]; see Lambek 2010a: 15-16) failed to grasp. In this context, being 'disorganized' took on a different meaning and it would be a mistake to perceive it as a lack of interest or efficiency. Rather, 'disorganization' should be seen 'as organising within a logic that prioritises collective need over greed' (Schaumberg 2013: 389). Instead of attempting to compare degrees of ethical integrity, we should perceive professionalism as committed and intersubjective ethical action. This involves acknowledgement of our wrongdoings, as well as the right to recognition (Taylor 1992). If recognition is a 'right', then it can also be expressed as an ethical demand. For this I take inspiration from the work of Henri Lefebvre in order to show how members of the collective sought to assert their right to the city (1996, 2003).

I understand this to be an ethical right that allowed them to inhabit the locality, in the sense of 'the plasticity of space, its modeling and the appropriation by groups and individuals of the conditions of their existence', with the aim of actively taking part in

[52] This is a common theme in ethnographies of popular music. Fonarow argues that the idea of 'boredom' tends to reinforce a stereotype of affluent young musicians and to implicitly moralize the gratifying and pleasurable aspects of music, as opposed to the dominant work ethic (2006: 180).

urban life (Lefebvre 1996: 76, 79). The practices through which WSP expressed this demand involved the musical rendering of urban spaces through performance (Stokes 1994). 'Music', write Connell and Gibson, 'may not always shape the spaces we inhabit, but in the media-saturated environments of contemporary cities and towns it has become a ubiquitous, and often deliberate, presence' (2003: 194). It is music-making as a form of ethical deliberation and a means to shape urban spaces that this chapter seeks to explore.

The development of popular music has always paralleled the processes of increasing urbanization and industrialization. By illustration, certain genres have been termed as 'sounds of the city' or 'urban rhythms' (Cohen 2007: 2). My interest here is not in foregrounding the ways in which music was appropriated and harnessed by the locality as an urban resource or tourist attraction (Chapter 1). Nor, conversely, am I concerned with how the city was depicted and imagined in music. Rather, I aim to highlight the ways in which sounds as urban rhythms are constituted by everyday spatial practices. Such an approach conceives of the city not as a reified notion, but as a modality of everyday practice and a site of intensified social, cultural and economic inter-connections.

The pluralism of urban routes or 'pathways' (Finnegan 1989; see also Chapter 6) provides an experientially grounded perspective that traces and captures the repetitive nature of urban practices. In order to illustrate the predominance of musical pathways in the everyday lives of the collective's members, I will show how these ordered a considerable part of their urban existence. This was achieved through the repetitive enactment of specific music practices that included, among others, organizing live music events, practicing and performing music, producing and distributing promotional material, as well as releasing records. Therefore, instead of music reflecting urban rhythms, I argue that these practices had their *own* rhythms, the beats of which patterned both Glasgow's urban environment and the social lives of my informants. The

regularity of music-making as a cyclical-temporal and spatial practice necessitates that we treat urban music as a spatio-temporal phenomenon.

To address this recurrent conjunction between urban space and time I turn once again to Lefebvre and his work on *Rhythmanalysis* (2004). For Lefebvre, 'all rhythms imply the relation of a time to a space, a localised time, or, if one prefers, a temporalised space' (ibid.: 89). Lefebvre distinguishes between cyclical and linear rhythms. The alternation of day and night is an example of the former, while linear rhythms derive from the almost mechanical repetition of movements [*gestes*], and they are generally associated with human work. In reality, the cyclical and the linear are indissociable: 'An example: so many days of work' (ibid.: 90). Therefore, rhythms are *relational* and they can only be measured against one another. They are measures passing through frequencies – there is no rhythm without measure [*mesure*], that is, without *repetition* (ibid.: 6). While all rhythms imply repetition, there can be no identical, absolute repetition. Rhythms imply *difference*. As such, only non-mechanical movements can have rhythms (ibid.: 78).

For Lefebvre, the reciprocal relation between human activity, time and space gives rise to rhythms, and I intend to demonstrate how the collective's rhythms as time-space continua required the active appropriation of urban territories but also the appropriation of time. Crucially, the rhythmicity of music practices afforded WSP the opportunity to inscribe *their own* rhythms into the urban landscape. Lefebvrian rhythms do not assume an automatism or impose an identical repetition, but instead imply the impossibility of 'perfect' simulation in day-to-day practice. As such, they encapsulate the dynamism of urban life, which, for all its mundane repetitiveness, is impregnated with the potential of diversity and innovation.

The collective's rhythmic response to the lack of material resources was predicated upon practices of sharing, an idea that reverberates throughout the chapter. Mutual help and the sharing of resources were ethical practices that emerged out of necessity.

Sharing was not a means to an end, but an integral dimension of urban music practice particularly conducive to the collective's circumstances. Rather than being a meta-practice, sharing was inextricably linked to the collective's nature and identity. My informants perceived sharing as a good practice in and of itself, beyond the specificities of *what* was being shared. Because the existence of WSP rested upon such a communal doing and collective sharing, to borrow or lend a guitar, or to record music and then make it available for free was, as Widlok (2004) has phrased it, a 'sharing "in"', that is, an extension of the group's boundaries to include individuals who took part in this process.

It would be erroneous to conceive of this form of sharing as an idiosyncratic process of gift exchange (Mauss 1990 [1925]) or as one-way, 'unbalanced' reciprocity (Sahlins 1988). As Widlok explains (2004: 60-62), it is impossible to determine the eventual outcome of the transfers involved, because a seemingly one-way transfer (sharing) might become a two-way transfer in the long term. Not only is it impossible to account for the intermittent but ongoing transfer of goods between people, but the time constraints embedded in fieldwork dramatically restrict our capacity to observe even a small part of this give-and-take. Most importantly, it is the very definition of sharing as a form of giving (and taking) that is problematic due to its consequentialist connotations. Sharing 'in', by contrast, absorbs this consequentialist logic and inverts it within a practice that is defined by its very nature. This does not mean that sharing implies the idea of a 'free' or 'pure' gift that is free from obligations and does not forge connections between individuals (see Laidlaw 2000).

It is the composition of the group that is altered through sharing, rather than the ownership of goods through exchange. Not only does sharing create an extended social group but it fosters communion and affects participants by endowing them with particular identities. This brings us back to the politics of recognition, not from below (Appadurai 2004), but from *within*. By inhabiting its own temporality, sharing as a virtuous practice need not be assessed retrospectively but it is determined by sheer

participation. Considering the ubiquity of sharing in urban music practices, its potential to produce a sustainable framework for music-making, as well as its capacity to bestow identities and alter the terms of recognition, we could say that sharing is *the* practice of all urban music practices.

However, let us not overstate this. Without diminishing its integral ethical role, I have already alluded to sharing as only one of various 'tactics' or 'ways of operating', which:

> [C]onstitute the innumerable practices by means of which users re-appropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production. [They also include] the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of "discipline"...A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances...because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing". Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into "opportunities" (de Certeau 1984: xiv-xv, xix).

The concept of tactics is useful in many respects to my argument. First, it neatly reflects the conditions confronted by the collective in an urban environment. Second, it highlights the collective's tendency to appropriate and transform spaces across the city in order to stage performances. Third, it shows that exercising the right to the city implies more than ephemeral spatial contestation and appropriation and ultimately promotes an ethical claim with regards to urban freedom and self-sufficiency. It also illuminates, to identify a fourth area of utility, the significance of sharing in providing a 'base' and a springboard for the acquisition of more permanent means to facilitate music-making. A fifth point is that it sheds light on the mutuality or 'alliance' (Lefebvre 2004: 60) of urban space and time. Finally, it hints at the creativity and recurrence of tactics not as transient replication, but as a persistent and conscious practice, adjusted each time to fit the circumstances.

These tactics consisted of concrete practices but also symbolic gestures. For example, being 'disorganized' was an organizational tactic which helped to distinguish WSP from

highly organized promoters, while the process of naming bands was an action of self-determination *par excellence*. Bodenhorn and vom Bruck contend that names and naming work at the intersection of identity, society and politics: 'That identities can be stolen, traded, suspended, and even erased through the name reveals the profound political power located in the capacity to name', but this also 'illustrates the property-like potential in names to transact social value [and] the powerful connection between name and self-identity' (2006: 2).

de Certeau himself pays attention to street and place names and how these take on diverse meanings by passersby (1984: 104). I propose a different view that sees names as having an inherent capacity to transmit meanings and to 'protect' or 'mask' their carriers. That is not to say that names cannot be endowed with multiple meanings. As I will demonstrate, the irony and ambiguity of many stage and institutional names were the main characteristics that ensured the obscurity and protection of the named. The deliberate polysemy of names equipped with an ironic twist meant that music managed to evade classification and pigeonholing by outsiders. Therefore, irony could also be a substitute for silence (Fernandez & Huber 2001: 5).

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The following section focuses upon the organization and execution of a WSP gig. This will be followed by a section that considers the emergence of WSP, their initial band involvement and participation, as well as their views on the value of making music. A striking feature of many of these bands was their whimsical, quirky and sometimes extravagant names. Therefore, the third section is devoted to the examination of names and their semantics. A subsequent detailed ethnographic description of the collective's music-related activities is offered in order to address the importance of sharing as an ethical act. The fifth and final section grapples with the contested spatiality of WSP practice and the musical articulation of urban space through the examination of the negotiations and maneuvering involved in acquiring appropriate spaces for

performance. It also explores the broader significance of musical pathways in the collective's life in the city, while the conclusion brings together these threads through a discussion of ethical professionalism.

3.2 Winning Sperm Party in Action: 10+ Electric Guitar Orchestra

I was waiting outside the room while the orchestra was sound-checking. I could barely hear Mary[53] speaking throughout our conversation, which was disrupted several times by the loud sound waves that poured into the hallways of the community centre. The previous night, *Take A Worm For A Walk Week* launched their third record at the Centre of Contemporary Arts (CCA). They had gained a strong reputation locally due to their musicianship, which was owed partly to their classical training. According to Peter, they and *Lapsus Linguae* were two of the 'best bands around'. At the CCA I met Peter and Iain who invited me to the Maryhill event. The line-up consisted of several acts but the main attraction was an electric guitar orchestra comprising ten or more guitarists. Iain asked me with a certain urgency whether I could play the guitar (I could not). So far, they had managed to confirm only six guitarists. We then talked about Peter J. Taylor, the orchestra's Glenn Branca-inspired conductor from Milton Keynes.[54]

Iain recounted a story about a similar event that had occurred a few years back. Specifically, how everybody in the orchestra had gotten really drunk and did not play well. He hoped that this time it would be a success though, but Peter cut him off saying that the following evening's event had a BYOB[55] policy, and so it would be 'even worse this time' – we laughed. Needless to say, the orchestra did not have the opportunity to rehearse for the performance properly.

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[53] Peter's girlfriend.

[54] Glenn Branca is an American avant-garde composer and no wave pioneer (see Masters 2007). Branca is also known for composing symphonies for electric guitar ensembles. He first conducted his symphony No. 13 for 100 electric guitars ('Hallucination City') in New York in 2001 (see Hughes 2007).

[55] BYOB stands for 'Bring Your Own Booze/Bottle/Bucket/Beer'.

The Maryhill community centre did not normally host music events of this kind. It was expensive to rent and was owned by the Glasgow City Council. WSP had paid £80 and a 'huge deposit', according to Colin. With a formal capacity of forty people, Iain believed that it actually fitted at least a hundred, and he had already informed 'the old woman' with whom he had made the arrangements that they needed more space. Booking a venue always involved similar limitations and negotiations, due largely to the existence of national and local policies. 'Right now', Iain continued, 'the old woman is loving me and Colin, but we'll see how that goes', hinting at her potential reaction to the sonic attack unleashed by a dozen or so electric guitar amplifiers. The gig was scheduled to finish by midnight because the centre was not appropriately soundproofed and was situated in a residential area. Iain also gave me a poster, which he and ex-*Divorce*e Lucy had designed (Chapter 4).

After the sound-check had finished the doors opened. It was almost 9pm – an hour after the gig's scheduled start. As I entered the room I saw Sarah who was collecting the door charge (£5). *Smack Wizards* were also scheduled to perform tonight, as well as *Eternal Fags* (see below). Various stuff was scattered on the table including a box containing 12'' vinyl records in elaborately-drawn white sleeves. I asked Sarah about the records and after pausing for a moment she said that she did not know to whom they belonged (it turned out that they were Peter J. Taylor's). She drew a beautiful rose-like flower on the inside of my wrist as an indication that I had paid the door fee. The narrow side of the room opposite the entrance was occupied by several guitar amplifiers. I counted nine, which varied in size and brand. They formed a background for the rest of the equipment surrounding a drum kit in the middle, while guitars and effects pedals were placed everywhere.

I stood next to one of the windows, and I saw Alistair, Jan and Anna from *Divorce* enter (Chapter 4). Alistair had arrived quite early because he was due to accompany the guitar orchestra on drums. He approached me while searching for his bag and said that he was already 'pissed [drunk]' and that he was 'sweating like a pig'. He expressed concern

about whether he would be capable of playing the drums later on and pointed out that the room was very warm and humid. I had begun to feel the heat myself but I did not manage to reply because *Eternal Fags* were taking the stage.

Iain was standing on the right and Colin was drumming intensely but with a calm look on his face. Iain was striking chords on his guitar while shouting in the microphone, which was placed on a stand in front of him. Occasionally, his mouth would cover the microphone in order to produce a particular 'fuzzy' effect with his voice. Their music was loud and aggressive. A member of the *Gummy Stumps* (see below) in the audience was recording the sound with his portable equipment. The band played a few songs and then Iain addressed the audience with a self-deprecating tone: 'Would you like one more [song]?'. People laughed and somebody shouted: 'Play two!'. Alistair joined the verbal exchange with his characteristic sharp humour and shouted: 'No, just one!'. The band played another song and finished their set.

After the *Smack Wizards* and *Blue Sabbath Black Fiji* performances,[56] with the latter featuring a one-off contribution from Iain and Colin, the eleven guitarists started testing their guitars.[57] Colin told me that they had eventually managed to recruit eleven instrumentalists to participate in the orchestra. Most of the guitarists were standing in front of the amplifiers, but Peter, along with James from the *The Cosmic Dead*,[58] was standing behind them. The sight of so many people and amps on stage in such a confined space was overwhelming. Peter, the conductor, walked in the middle of the room and stood with his back to the audience. He handed out sheet music to the orchestra and started by saying: 'Hello Glasgow! It is great to be here tonight. I fucking love Glasgow!'. Considering the small-scale character of the event, his words were filled with irony.

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[56] *Blue Sabbath Black Fiji* were a guitar noise duo consisting of two French expats living in Glasgow.

[57] Including, amongst others, Peter, Corey, Iain, and Lucy.

[58] A local psychedelic rock quartet.

However, the music was immense. They played two long pieces and Alistair blended well with the orchestra. My ostensibly good-quality earplugs barely did anything to filter the wall of noise stemming from the guitar amps; rather, the physicality of frequencies engulfed my body and the sound absorbed me into its fibers. By contrast, all players' eyes were fixed on the conductor. He was also playing the guitar in between his expressive gestures towards his orchestra. Because voices were drowned by the volume's intensity, he also provided instructions by moving his lips. In short, the orchestra's sober and disciplined approach to performance contrasted sharply with the open-ended, cathartic effect of the sonic assault underpinning their musical production. When the first song finished, an awkward silence hung in the air. The audience appeared to be totally immersed in the echoes of layered noise that had left them numb and unable to clap or cheer. Alistair, who was sweating excessively, grabbed two bottles of beer, finished the half empty one and opened the other with his teeth. He drank some and then took out a bottle of Buckfast and had a large sip. He placed it on the floor and continued looking Peter in the eyes awaiting his instructions.[59]

The second piece was shorter, partially because halfway through the performance the janitor, a middle-aged man who was the only person present in the premises responsible for the building stormed into the room. He went straight over to Iain and started shouting at him. Iain placed his guitar down and left the room along with the man, but the orchestra continued their musical assault. As they were leaving the receptionist said something to the conductor, who responded with a calm look while playing his guitar. After a minute or so, Iain came back and informed Peter J. Taylor that the show must end. He gestured as if he was saying: 'It's over'. Peter then signaled to the rest of the orchestra to play another 'two' [verses, apparently]. The music went on for another minute or so. The set finished with a sustained applause from the forty people in the audience. Peter J. Taylor turned to us and stated that he would like to thank all the people who played in the orchestra, as well as everybody who had come to watch the

[59] Buckfast is a brand of fortified-wine that is widely known and rather controversial in Scotland, especially in Lanarkshire. It has been associated with anti-social behaviour.

gig. I later found out from Iain that the reason for the termination of the gig was that the centre had received several complaints from residents in the area.

3.3 The Value of Making Music

WSP members were in their early twenties. None of them was originally from Glasgow, but, with the exception of Peter, they were all from the Trossachs Stirling area: Colin and Iain grew up in Callander, while Peter and Corey were from Alloa and Aberfoyle respectively. They had moved to Glasgow to study, with Peter and Iain taking up sound engineering, Colin doing science and business, and Corey enrolling in a graphic design course. Colin was currently employed as a manager in a local poster distribution company and Iain had joined Colin's team after quitting from his previous job at a supermarket. As a graduate, Corey initially worked in a graphic design company but he subsequently left in order to work in the kitchen of a bar-restaurant in the West End. His new job allowed him greater flexibility and ample time to make music. Likewise, Peter had become relatively disillusioned with his job as a sound engineer and he now occasionally helped his father in the field of market research.

Colin and Iain knew each other from school, while the rest of the collective's members first joined them not in Glasgow but in Stirling, where Iain and Colin organized music events during weekends. These gigs took place in spaces such as the School Hall, the bands' own or other people's garages, as well as other settings. According to Colin, putting on shows initially involved a different intention and served a different purpose to later on:

> We were doing it ourselves because it was a natural thing to do. We hadn't thought about it and we weren't "anti-corporate" or anything. We probably wanted to be rockstars just playing our own gigs. It was like a school disco where you could get really drunk.

In fact, as Peter explained to me, music itself did not seem particularly important either:

> It wasn't about the music being good back then. It was just something to do being underage and it was a pub you would be let in and where your mates could play.

Despite their versatility as instrumentalists playing in different bands, WSP were not classically trained musicians but largely self-taught. The characteristics of autonomy and lack of pedagogy in the acquisition of musical skills within Western rock has been well documented (see Clawson 1999: 104).[60] Colin had received some formal tuition. He had taken up piano lessons, but he was currently a drummer. Colin expressed his lack of appreciation towards his 'theoretical education' as having the potential to help him improve his drumming skills. Trumpet was Corey's first instrument at school, which he then dropped in favour of the electric guitar. This did not last long though, because he started playing the drums in *Plaaydoh* (see below) before realizing that he was not particularly good, which resulted in Colin taking over. Corey subsequently settled for the bass-guitar. Apart from *Eternal Fags* where he played the guitar, Iain drummed and played the bass-guitar in other bands. He had received relevant training at school for both instruments. For his main band though, *Eternal Fags*, he was playing the electric guitar, which was also Peter's instrument. Peter had never received any formal music training whatsoever.

What made possible the simultaneous membership in multiple bands was their intermittent nature. For example, Iain and Colin sometimes would not rehearse for a month if they had no upcoming gigs. However, the mere fact that the collective's practical circumstances allowed them to participate in different bands does not explain *why* these bands existed in the first place. As Peter put it:

> It's totally about the interaction with different people, you have one interaction with a sound group and then a different one with a group of people who play different stuff. You have a lot of different types of music you are interested in, but you know that other people are not necessarily interested in all of them.

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[60] I use 'rock' as an umbrella term in the broadest possible sense. Musical diversity and overlap, as well as my informants' dismissive attitude towards generic categorizations inhibit me from employing narrow definitions.

Indeed, the consensus was that social interaction and involvement in diverse music genres were the main reasons behind this prolific activity. For Iain, there was nothing compelling about playing an instrument alone at home and he needed to practice with other people in order to trigger his creativity. By contrast, Corey highlighted the experience of live performance and individual creativity as equally rewarding processes:

> Half the fun of playing music is playing with people, and that's half of where the passion lies; but also spending the time on your own to create something and then take it to people and see if that works...It's a good feeling when you get something that could "work" and then you take it to practice and other people enjoy it...When all the ideas come together and create an end product, especially when you get to the point where you're playing it for the first time live and you pull it off...It gives me goosebumps.

I was intrigued not only by the sheer amount of creative activity and the numerous bands associated with the collective, but also by an ongoing discussion about starting new bands and projects on top of their existing ones and the various one-off (and sometimes impromptu) performances that took place in WSP events. This shuttered my preconceptions about the notion of *a band* as an entity relatively stable through time, necessitating an exclusive focus and dedication on the part of its members. The word 'band' itself carries strong connotations of membership, solidarity and belonging (Cohen 1991: 36).

Moving to the urban context of Glasgow provided WSP with opportunities for music cross-fertilization and exchange that resulted in an array of bands. Although much of WSP's musical output was the outcome of part-time engagement (see also Finnegan 1989: 304), I encountered a surprisingly complex web of affiliated bands. Iain and Colin had been in a band since they were teenagers and when they first came to Glasgow they were called *Household*. With the addition of Corey they changed their name to *Plaaydoh* but the band later disbanded. Corey went on to form the now also defunct *Stomachs* and later *Smack Wizards* in which Sarah, Colin's girlfriend, played the drums.

Iain and Colin continued making music together as *Eternal Fags*. Colin had briefly joined Barry in *Teenage Ricky*, and also had a parallel project called *Gummy Stumps* along with Scott (who had recorded the orchestra's performance), and Stephan, a well-known local artist and GSA graduate. Iain was also performing with ex-*Divorce* member Lucy as *Phat Trophies* and, additionally, he played in *Neighbourhood Gout* along with Barry. Iain was planning to launch another music project with Peter's brother. Peter's main band was *Gropetown* but for quite a while he had also played with his brother in *Almost Empty* (a name they subsequently changed to *Grozny*), with whom they had also performed once as *D.+I.Y.* Peter also 'jammed' with other friends of his in a band called *Cop Porn*.

This brief band genealogy demonstrates the connections and interrelations that characterized band participation and membership. It also alludes to the plural value of music, which was translated into a variety of practices beyond composition and performance. In the next chapter, I will take a detailed look at issues of band membership and musical creativity. In this chapter, in contrast, I focus upon the variety of these arrangements. I now address a salient feature of this complex network: band names. I consider several of these stage names in an attempt to illustrate their significance in the production of meaning. As Finnegan puts it: 'First, and most important, bands had *names*' (1989: 263).

3.4 The Importance of Names and Naming

I was struck by the imaginative names adopted by many of the bands affiliated with WSP. Laing offers an historical account of several band names, naming practices and meanings since the 1950s (1985: 41-52). Based upon his analysis, it would seem that some of the aforementioned stage names shared semantic similarities with band names from the punk era.[61] For example, the apparent meaninglessness of *Cop Porn*, *Eternal*

[61] Laing traces the shifting meanings of the word 'punk', from its association with deviant sexuality to its use as an affectionate (albeit derogatory) term akin to the British English 'bugger' (1985: 41-42). See also Fonarow for 'indie's' connotations of 'smallness, childhood, affection, and, at times, derision' (2006: 45).

Fags, *Gropetown* and *Smack Wizards* evokes the punk band *Sex Pistols*. However, Laing shows that *Sex Pistols* had a name form that was unusual within punk and that mainly derived from 1960s 'hippie' bands. Also, argues Laing, their name was far from meaningless; apart from making sense at the level of grammar as an adjectival phrase or compound noun, it did resonate at the level of meaning through sexual and phallic symbolism. But considering the intolerance exhibited by the DiY cohort towards homophobic, sexist and racist ideas and expressions, to argue that *Eternal Fags*, for example, was an implicit celebration of male sexuality would be ill-conceived.

This is due to a crucial characteristic of several band names: irony. The direct inversion of established values, norms and ideas through the adoption of names that were obscene – but rarely humorous or ironic – was a central tactic of the naming process of punk-rock bands (Laing 1985: 47). By contrast, a lot of the band names associated with WSP worked *only* at the level of irony. Otherwise, their subversive qualities and meanings would be distorted. *Household* and *Plaaydoh* are examples of band names that implicitly critiqued the ideas of safety and comfort associated with home, family and childhood,[62] while *Phat Trophies* can be perceived as a self-deprecating comment on professional or financial success.

Another concrete way in which the subversion of social and cultural norms was expressed through band names was the grammatical 'abuse' of words. Malapropisms such as *Plaaydoh* and *Phat Trophies,*[63] and spoonerisms such as *Cop Porn* exhibit deliberate grammatical 'errors'. These express a dissonance between name and object, which in turn conveys a dissonance between the object and its associated meanings, and, ultimately between dominant social ideas and the reality on the ground. Thus, phonetic dissonances or lexical disharmonies encapsulated a subtle form of social critique. Importantly, these erroneous and dissonant names did *not* articulate an idea of

[62] Playdoh is a brand of modeling clay for children.

[63] My favourite name in this category is *Kylie Minoise*, a noise solo act from Glasgow.

direct inversion of, nor opposition to, established social values, as many punk band names did. Rather, they pointed to their incongruity and hypocrisy.

Nevertheless, certain band names *had* oppositional and negative meanings that embodied ideas such as a break (*Divorce*), destruction (*Grozny*),[64] inferiority or low status (*Almost Empty*), and disease (*Neighbourhood Gout*). The semantic transparency of these and many punk names (Laing 1985: 46) can be contrasted with the polysemy and considerable ambiguity of the other names mentioned above. Take for example the words 'fags', 'grope', 'smack' or 'household'. Could it be that *Eternal Fags* referred to endless cigarettes and that *Household* reflected the idea of housekeeping? Perhaps *Gropetown* was not meant to imply city-wide sexual promiscuity but, rather, (social) uncertainty? Had a 'smack wizard' anything to do with heroin or was he or she somebody holding magical powers in order to physically hurt people? All these definitions seem plausible at the level of denotation.[65]

It is evident, however, that the analysis of specific meanings of names should take into account their various connotations, as well as the context within which these names are produced, adopted and used. Laing argues that the meanings of band names are gradually reduced to their primary signifiers. They become signs for band members themselves. The naming process as a shock tactic has a relatively short life, while any subversive or rebellious qualities initially associated with band names may subsequently become linked to the musicians' behaviour and antics. That is why 'as a *name*', Laing notes, 'Sex Pistols finally resonates no more or less than Beatles' (1985: 52).

What about the meaning of '*Winning Sperm Party*'? In an early post on one of the social media employed by the collective, they wrote:

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[64] The capital of Chechnya in Southwest Russia, which was destroyed by the Russian army during 1994-1995.

[65] *Teenage Ricky* and *D.+I.Y* could be taken literally, in the sense that they derived from the real names of their members. However, the former name's ironic connotations of adolescence/innocence and the latter's association with DiY cannot be disregarded.

[P]robability of being a winning sperm.

> The average human male ejaculates *17 litres* of sperm in his lifetime. The average ejaculation contains, on average, *4 millilitres* of sperm. Therefore, 17,000/4, the average male ejaculates *4,250* times in his lifetime. Each ejaculation contains an average of *320,000,000* sperm cells. Therefore the average male produces *1,360,000,000,000* sperm cells in his lifetime. The average man has *2.5* children in his lifetime. Therefore, 1,360,000,000,000/2.5, *there was only a 1 in 544,000,000,000 chance of you being born.* That doesn't even take into account the chances of both your parents being born and meeting each other.[66]

The collective's name, as well as the above calculation, does not so much convey phallocentric views, but rather a sense of 'success' or 'breakthrough' and a celebratory idea of music, captured in the collective's name by the word 'party'. The improbability of one's having been born is a reason for celebration. For WSP the same applied to music, the pleasurable aspects of which made it a deeply rewarding experience and worthy of celebration. Its social dimension was again designated by the word 'party'. As shown in the previous section, for WSP music was inherently social. The overtly sexual, anti-prestige but optimistic ideas conveyed by the name resonated with the names of early punk record labels (Laing 1985: 49).

Considering the rich meanings embedded in stage or institutional names, I was surprised that many of the answers I received regarding the naming process, including WSP, *Cry Parrot* and *Divorce* (Chapters 4 & 5), focused upon its 'randomness'. This was astonishing because names were not only important for their symbolic meaning, but according to Finnegan:

> The name was the focus of allegiance, an identification of both group and individual in conversing with outsiders and often a crisp epitomising of the group's shared philosophy...The name was the key focus in any promotional literature or insignia...When a group was first formed it had no real identity, but once it had a name took on a new quality. The very fact that the band had its own title gave its players a mark of unity and shared purpose for both themselves and outsiders. The life-cycle of bands was short and their organisation informal and precarious: but through the system of band names, each group marked out its well-recognized claim to its own unique identity and pride (1989: 263-265).

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[66] Retrieved from http://www.myspace.com/winningspermparty/blog [Accessed 25 June 2012].

We may also apply Finnegan's insights to institutional names. Names had a deeply symbolic value but they also served practical purposes. For both reasons, names could acquire property-like characteristics, and their ownership could be the object of considerable debate (Cohen 1991: 38), even legal disputes (see McPherson 2000). Consequently, band names and institutional names can be perceived as things and thus separable from the entities that they represent, as well as objects of transaction.

As Finnegan shows, and contrary to Laing's assertion, the integral value of names and their capacity to express but also define identities point to the inherent power or agency of names and thus their irreducibility to their primary signifiers (Bodenhorn & vom Bruck 2006: 3-5, 26-27). As a result, the naming process may also be one of objectification and recognition: bands (and other groups) had no *real* identity before the acquisition of a name. Therefore, what names are and do is clearly linked to the process of bestowing a name and what this initial act aims to achieve (Bodenhorn & vom Bruck 2006: 25).[67]

What distinguishes naming individuals at birth from naming a music-related group is that the latter clearly involves agency on the part of the named.[68] As Laing explains, whereas individuals and their names demonstrate a contingent relationship, bands and their names do not: 'The name deliberately chosen can then take on a *motivated* relation to the person or group to which it refers' (1985: 42). Why is it then that many of my informants stressed their random approach towards name-giving? Did they consciously 'deny' their agency or believe that names were unimportant or just meaningless markers? Given the cross-cultural focus on a 'good fit' between names and persons (Bodenhorn & vom Bruck 2006: 27), one would expect that group-naming would be the outcome of a profoundly intentional and painstakingly examined act.

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[67] Naming can also be used to establish moral accountability (Bodenhorn & vom Bruck 2006: 1-2). For the moral significance of Yemeni naming practices, see vom Bruck (2006: 238-242). For the ways in which place-names are imbued with moral values among the Western Apache, see Basso (1996).

[68] The distinction between name imposition and self-naming is not clear-cut. See Bodenhorn & vom Bruck (2006) and the other essays in that volume for different degrees of the tension between the 'tyranny of the name' and self-determination through naming.

Indeed, I do not believe that the chosen names were random in the sense that any name 'would do'. Neither do I hold that my informants perceived these names as meaningless. Rather, I would argue that there were strong links between name and musical content and, therefore, that at least some of the reasons for choosing specific names were musical. In Peter's words:

> People don't really care what name is at the top, it maybe helps them recognize different gigs but at the same time people are going there to see the bands and are there to listen to your music.

The primacy of content over label is a good enough reason for not paying due attention to 'what name is at the top'. However, it seems to me that apart from echoing the ideas and meanings discussed above, the specific names were also strategically employed in order to reveal as well as to obscure or 'mask' the musical content, and thus 'protect' it. None of the names mentioned here reveal any musical associations. Moreover, several of these names, as well as Stuart's view that *Cry Parrot* was a 'ridiculous' name (see Chapter 5), echo the widespread belief that sometimes 'ugly' or 'silly' personal names become masks that protect people (Bodenhorn & vom Bruck 2006: 8).

But why protect music and from whom should it be protected? The answer lies in many bands' conviction that their music was somehow unique and unclassifiable. Therefore, the use of ironic, non-musical names served as a means for bands to avoid internally pigeonholing their sound (and promoters and record labels their musical inclinations), discouraging externally-imposed classifications and judgements. Duncombe writes that 'irony is the opposite of authenticity' but on the following page he exclaims that irony is a way to keep 'the vultures' off 'culture' (1997: 153-154).

A name that resisted musical categorization demonstrated musical openness. It could thus become an effective strategy and an authenticating tool for bands, labels and promoters alike. At the same time, names loudly revealed this intention exactly through silencing musical connotations. The dual process of foreclosing and disclosing musical

information and intentions respectively through the adoption of specific names conveyed the message that the musical content was, in a sense, 'authentic', but also open-ended, in flux or in the process of 'becoming' (Chapter 6). This conviction was encapsulated in names and was evident in the ostensibly 'random' naming process, while also finding its social and ethical articulation and expression in the way in which the collective operated.

3.5 The Virtue of Sharing

Playing music in multiple bands was the main impetus for the formation of WSP in 2007 and the reason for subsequent developments, such as the launch of a record label under the same name. But in its initial form, WSP was an online group blog that hosted gig and record reviews. The latter focused almost exclusively upon Scottish musicians and almost always upon young and unsigned bands, while gig reviews featured music acts that performed in venues across Glasgow. However, the reviewing process was anything but satisfying for WSP and it was consequently abandoned. Colin in particular, who was the main writer for the blog, could not see the point in producing a negative review instead of highlighting the positive aspects of music he found appealing. This emerged as an issue because the collective received dozens of records from musicians across Scotland, but a lot of the material was not to their taste. Their foray into music journalism ended quite quickly.

WSP activities were usually the outcome of collective action. Although they did not hold scheduled meetings to decide on future ventures, they would meet as friends at least weekly. Each member's degree of participation in the collective depended on the activity in question. Corey, for example, did not help with the organization of events as much as others did. However, he would provide more hands-on support on the night. Not all ideas were put forward as a group: any member could release his band's music on the label and even organize a WSP event based upon individual preference rather than collective decision.

When *Plaaydoh* recorded an EP,[69] they decided to make it available as a free download through the WSP website.[70] The idea of setting up a free-download record label sprung out of that first EP. The rationale was that promoting young musicians in Scotland by freely disseminating their music seemed a more fruitful and realistic aspiration than expecting *Plaaydoh* or other bands to generate profit (see Chapter 6). Contrary to the dominant economic model, Iain believed that 'getting the herds is more important than making sales'.

WSP would strive to release one record per month with varying degrees of success. Except the ones from their own bands, the bulk of free-download releases were sourced from musicians with whom WSP were associated through friendship or mutual participation in the local DiY network. The collective would not intervene or manipulate the recorded material unless their support was specifically sought for. The speed and versatility of digital formats in music dissemination rendered downloads highly appropriate for this venture. It follows that an additional advantage of free downloads was that they could keep the momentum going, as opposed to physical releases, the production and distribution of which were both time-consuming and costly.

Nevertheless, over the course of my fieldwork the collective became increasingly skeptical about the value of this practice. The free and disposable nature of digital files, the argument went, inhibited people from taking these releases *seriously*. This explains why the complete lack of ambition to make profit as a record company and the subsequent production of physical copies were not mutually exclusive or contradictory. From early on WSP released their own music on CD-Rs and also encouraged other bands to produce CD-Rs themselves. These these were sold cheaply through the website or at gigs. The collective were against using the standard jewel case and CD-Rs were normally housed in handcrafted sleeves with handmade artwork.

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[69] 'Extended Play' is recorded music, in any format, that includes more music than a single but not enough for an album.

[70] http://winningspermparty.com/ [Accessed 5 May 2013].

All music on CD-Rs was also freely available in digital form, while any money made from sales was forwarded back to the bands. WSP believed that CD-Rs were a relatively economic and practical way of 'spreading the word' about music they liked. More specifically, the production of CD-Rs stemmed from the assumption that bands should have something to sell at gigs, where audiences would *expect* to be able to buy a physical copy of the music. Thus, CD-Rs were mostly a publicity technique geared towards attracting attention rather than financial gains.

Although there was a revival of and fondness for the cassette tape medium within the broader network of individuals involved in DiY music practices, at the time of my fieldwork the only such release by WSP was a tape by Iain's band, *Phat Trophies*. The growing dissatisfaction with the public's lack of response eventually led WSP to produce vinyl records. Vinyl releases were perceived as a serious pursuit due to the high production costs involved (covered by WSP) and the often elaborate artwork that accompanied the records. WSP had released only one 12'' vinyl record by *Grozny*, while two additional releases – a split 12'' by *Gummy Stumps* and *Vom*,[71] and a 7'' EP by *Ultimate Thrush* (see also Chapter 4) – were expected to become available just as I was finishing my fieldwork. The number of copies produced would be split between WSP and the bands, with each party being responsible for selling their own copies and subsequently keeping the money. Understandably, WSP vinyl records would be sold at a higher price than CD-Rs and the collective were planning to use the cash they raised to fund future releases.

The variety of music formats in part reflected the collective's practical circumstances: the preference for digital files, CD-Rs, and cassette tapes was largely dictated by financial considerations and specifically the lack of sufficient resources.[72] To gather the required amount for the production of vinyl records the collective decided to organize

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[71] *Vom* were an instrumental noise rock trio from Glasgow.

[72] Early on, the collective had received a small grant from the Scottish Enterprise, a non-departmental public body, that they used to release CD-Rs.

fundraising events, such as an all-nighter at The Audio Lounge studios in Maryhill, where thirteen bands had agreed to perform.[73] The choice of music formats also had strong ethical foundations. In discussing the production and circulation of cassette tapes within the underground hip hop scene in the Bay Area of San Fransisco, Harrison argues that: 'Their antiquated technology gives a nod to nostalgic sentiments of local tradition, upholds the democratic priorities of DiY movements, and serves as a technological barrier to mainstream co-optation' (2006: 298).

WSP exhibited considerable ambiguity in their relationship with technology. Caught up in a tension between the lack of financial means and the concern to make music widely accessible, the collective developed a contradictory stance in embracing technological innovations, while at the same time holding on to less advanced forms of music dissemination. However, their distaste for jewel cases and their preference for CD-Rs with carefully crafted artwork testified to their antipathy for mass-produced artefacts and their inclination towards more 'authentic' objects.

This view was also reflected in the relatively limited production of objects, revealing two further ideas. First, that live music was favoured over pre-recorded music (see also Fonarow 2006: 49). The second had ethical significance: contrary to the normal practice of the music industry, bands were not forced to produce a large number of copies when what they really needed was a limited run. It was evident, then, that CD-Rs, cassette tapes and vinyl records embodied meanings that transcended their functionality as sound mediums. After all, digital files served the purpose of dissemination perfectly. It followed that these artefacts were employed as markers of authenticity and cultural distinction, while simultaneously providing the collective with the opportunity to operate *within* an existing and established system of music circulation and distribution. That system, which generated audience expectations and blurred the boundaries

[73] Finnegan notes the importance of 'charity' in local music-making (1989: 288-292). Not all DiY events attracted funds for the musicians or the organizers. Certain events were free to attend, while others donated the proceeds to some cause unrelated to music.

between music appreciation and material consumption, was not opposed to, but rather emulated, appropriated and adjusted in order to fit the needs of WSP.

The distributed nature of responsibility for the release and dissemination of records demonstrates that the lack of clear boundaries and discrete roles in WSP extended beyond its core membership. For example, free downloads were recorded by the bands although sometimes Iain or Peter, who had set-up a small studio in his flat, would help the bands to record and mix their material (see also Chapter 4).[74] A handful of releases, including the ones by *Eternal Fags* and *Smack Wizards*, were recorded at the Green Door Studio in the West End, which had launched a government-supported youth scheme. Then, it was bands who normally designed the artwork, while the pressing of the vinyl records was reluctantly outsourced to two different companies.

Quite frequently, the acquisition of relevant raw materials, as well as the production process, was collaborative. For the 7'' vinyl artwork, *Ultimate Thrush* managed to order three hundred fifty sheets of card through the Art School for £80 (Figure 3.1). CD pressings were done by Gerard (Chapter 1 & 6), who had his own CD duplicator and charged £25 for fifty copies. Finally, Stephan had a friend who owned a small printing company and who was willing to offer a discount on the rather expensive screen-printing of the *Gummy Stumps*/*Vom* 12'' artwork. The organization and execution of music events (see below) was probably the context within which this mutual involvement was played out most clearly. It was not uncommon for posters and flyers to be designed by individuals outside the collective, or collaboratively, as in the case of the Maryhill event (Figure 3.2). Again, WSP mobilized their friends and acquaintances for the printing of publicity material, while they repeatedly emphasized the importance of their contacts in, or revolving around the GSA regarding the production of crafted

[74] 'Mixing' is, according to Izhaki, 'a process in which multitrack material – whether recorded, sampled or synthesized – is balanced, treated and combined into a multichannel format, most commonly two-channel stereo. But in addition to that – and more importantly – a mix is a sonic presentation of emotions, creative ideas and performance' (2008: 4-5).

material. Online publicity was also a collective affair, with other DiY promoters advertising WSP events on their social media and vice versa.

Figure 3.1: Outer sleeve of the Ultimate Thrush 7".[75]

Moreover, sharing musical equipment at gigs was the norm. For instance, bands would share one drum kit and sometimes the same amplifiers. At the Maryhill gig, Alistair had used Colin's drum kit and he torn two drum skins, therefore they would subsequently negotiate a price for repair. Pieces of equipment were often provided by people outside the core WSP membership, such as Barry, who would lend his trademark blue guitar amplifier without him necessarily being scheduled to perform at the gig.

[75] Retrieved from http://www.oliverpitt.co.uk/ [Accessed 13 September 2012].

Figure 3.2: Winning Sperm Party posters.[76]

[76] Retrieved from http://cargocollective.com/moonshakedesign/POSTERS & http://www.oliverpitt.co.uk/ respectively [Accessed 10 October 2012].

Similarly, WSP had purchased a petrol generator for outdoor events. This was not owned exclusively by the collective but by all seven people who had contributed, including a part-time filmmaker who occasionally used it to set up an outdoor cinema.

Other individuals, such as Sarah, assisted with various other practical tasks such as collecting door charges. Mary, with whom I was chatting before the orchestra's performance, was almost always in the audience but to my knowledge she did not directly participate in the collective's activities. However, I could not disregard the fact that intimate relations did play a role in forging new collaborations and projects. As Helen (see also Chapter 6), a GSA lecturer, nicely put it, one could draw a 'romantic love map' of Glasgow and that these associations had given rise to various partnerships, events and projects.

Even audience members, who were neither friends nor partners of band members, contributed by moving furniture or decorating the venue. I noted in the previous chapter that audiences are absolutely essential for a musical performance to be deemed successful. The very fact that audiences were *there* and their money was used to fund the collective's future projects rendered them participants in these events rather than passive consumers. And this without taking into account that several people in the audience were also performing on the night or at least played in bands that belonged to the same extended network. Supporters also came from outside of Glasgow, particularly when WSP organized shows in different cities, such as Edinburgh, or toured with their bands and had to rely on promoters based in other locations.

It would be tempting to perceive this practice of sharing and cooperation as a form of utilitarianism. However, by doing so we would unavoidably reduce the complexity of the practice as well as deprive it from its ethical potential. Expectations of reciprocity do not rule out the possibility that, in this context, the act of sharing could be virtuous *sui generis* (MacIntyre 1981). As Colin explained:

> I think it's just the idea of sharing stuff, when you like some music and you want to share it with people and be able to do it as cheaply as possible, or even free if possible. I mean, it's good to be able to get people free downloads and that anyone, even if they don't have any money or anything, as long as they've got an Internet connection, they can download it. And now there's nothing, there's no barrier really. It has to be as inclusive as possible.

Widlok makes precisely this point when he says that:

> Sharing in these instances need not involve a generous person who gives, nor a transfer at all, but it entails allowing others access, and to do this for its own sake, i.e. for the sake of jointly enjoying these resources (2004: 63).

He notes that sharing as a virtue does not divide individuals or groups into givers and receivers and does constitute a sharing 'out', but a sharing 'in', by opening up the circle of people who have access to these resources.[77] Notably, the association of various individuals with the collective was relevant to practical matters such as the ones described above, but also in the way WSP members reflected upon the reasons for the collective's very existence, nature and identity. For Colin, Iain, Peter, and Corey, the bands that had released music on the label and the individuals that regularly contributed to the organization of music events *were* part of the collective. This resonates with Widlok's remark: 'Sharing creates a shared base, triggering the emergence of social groups and shared identities' (ibid.: 61). This, in turn, reflects Colin's opinion that:

> DiY always ends up being a community sort of thing. Most of the time it's like: "Can you do this, can you do that?". It's not like: "I'm going to do everything about it". It's not a perfect democracy, but the more people on board with something, the more likely it's going to be worthwhile doing.

In this context, sharing was a virtuous act realizing basic human goods that involved the joint use of resources and mutual enjoyment of music but also bestowed users with particular identities. That is not to say that the collective did not set specific goals that triggered collaborations and acts of sharing. But Colin's views forcefully demonstrate that these goals were undermined by the primacy of sharing as an ethical practice in and

[77] Musical accessibility is not limited to the physical contact between music and listener but also involves participation and personal reception (Eisentraut 2013).

of itself. As such, what animated basic goods was precisely the capacity of mutually using and enjoying these resources for the sake of it, rather than the ability to share specific *things*. Thus, these goods were intrinsic to sharing and constituted by that very process. Sharing 'is not done *by default* but it is constituted *by turnout*' (Widlok 2004: 63). Therefore, releasing and consuming music, as well as organizing events, were predicated upon sharing, which opened up the collective's inner circle. The 'passionate drive to *share*' music that they liked (Frith 1997: 14) was central in this process. WSP managed to share their music with others but most importantly to share 'in', that is to extend the boundaries of the group, thus changing themselves in the process.

3.6 Music-Making as Urban Practice

When members of the collective first settled in Glasgow their experience of organizing and playing gigs back in Stirling did not allow them to deal effectively with the specificities of their new setting. As newcomers they lacked the necessary local knowledge and contacts to put on their own events. Initially, they had decided to follow the established path by booking slots through existing local promoters. However, Colin boldly stated that the experience was a negative one:

> When we were in our first band from the country and wanted to play gigs in Glasgow, we'd come through and being ripped off by...bastards! So then we realized that we're not doing that again.[78]

Therefore, the formation and evolution of WSP reflected sentiments of discontent with the allegedly 'corrupted' promotion companies. Partly, then, WSP sprung out of a reaction to what were considered to be unfair and unethical practices and represented a coping mechanism: as a collective body, WSP could assert their right to access urban resources and materialize on their own terms the desire to make and perform music in the city. A by-product of this process was that it transformed and thus engendered a specific form of relation with local promoters and other music actors and institutions in

[78] Colin was referring to the notorious 'pay-to-play' policy (Introduction & Chapter 6).

the city. This might be classed as unsurprising given that during the process of urban migration different groups come into intense contact, defining subsequent relations.

As Turino remarks, in such contexts music-making as a creative practice alludes to particular social and practical circumstances, conditions and constraints. It becomes a means for the group to negotiate its relationship with its 'others' and places an emphasis 'on people, practices, and specific historical moments rather than on products and superorganic notions of "culture" and "music"' (1993: 12). But the gradual rejection of promotional policies was in tension with the collective's initial desire to integrate into the city's musical landscape. For Colin:

> WSP has basically nothing to do with everyone else's idea of music and we make up quite a large proportion of the local music scene. But noone – who is in a position to acknowledge it – is acknowledging it for some reason.

This tension was articulated in spatial terms. The collective employed a variety of settings for music performances including music venues, abandoned buildings, flats, record stores and community centres, as well as open and public spaces. This is not an exhaustive list and it excludes practice and recording spaces; it does suggest though the salience of urban spatiality in music-making and the latter's potential as a process of spatial contestation. 'Urban environments', write Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 'provide frequent opportunities for spatial contests because of their complex structures and differentiated social entities that collude and compete for control over material and symbolic resources' (2003: 19). Within the realm of WSP practices, this material and symbolic struggle became acutely evident in the organization and carrying out of music events. Chapter 5 examines the organizational processes of DiY live music promotion in greater detail. Here, however, I will focus upon one of its main aspects, which is the ongoing issue of securing a place for performance. According to Peter:

> For putting on a gig you just need to book the bands and a venue, get a poster, transport the equipment and divide up the money. Other than that, I cannot think of anything else technically.

Despite this laconic description, the process was – usually – long and complex. After the main band was booked and financial agreements were made verbally, members of the collective would proceed to book an appropriate venue. The aim was to locate and use different and diverse spaces across the city. This aspiration stemmed from the high value placed upon the uniqueness of music venues. As Colin explained:

> When you think about gigs you've been to and they've been really special, the ones that I can think of are the ones in spaces that aren't normal, aren't like "ordinary" venues.

This is not to say that the majority of WSP events took place in 'unusual' places, but WSP did occasionally put this idea forward, for example, with the help of the electricity generator purchased for outdoor summertime gigs. Novelty was desirable, but finding a space that was not 'ordinary' was a hard task. Even booking 'generic' venues presented challenges. First, many small venues or pub function rooms would be already booked for the specified date. Then, nearly all venues charged a hire fee (usually around £50), which the collective would cover. Certain venues, such as the 13th Note had a slightly different policy. They provided the space for free as long as their bar sales would reach a specific amount. This increased during weekends and, while promoters did not have to pay any money upfront, they were still responsible for covering the difference in case of a deficit in the venue's bar sales.

A third difficulty arose from the fact that over time several places closed down, which imposed a break in the continuity of WSP events at specific places. For example, the collective used to organize events at the Ivy bar, which was totally free to hire. However, the business closed down and the place reopened as Mitchell's (see Chapter 5), which was in turn renamed to Gambetta, and is currently an Indian food takeaway. Despite the fact that the new owners of Mitchell's and Gambetta were not aware that a string of gigs had taken place in the premises, they were still willing to provide the space for free. Nevertheless, since it became a food takeaway, music events had to be terminated. With more established music venues, such as Mono or the 13th Note, the

booking process was also less straightforward than expected. Apart from relevant fees and policies, in some instances there were additional issues and challenges that inhibited WSP from hosting events in these places. As Peter recounts:

> I think it isn't always as simple as just going and asking at a bar though...I mean, that can happen, but at the same time it depends on *who* is that walks into the bar. Like, being younger, I remember walking into Mono and saying I've got these three bands that I thought were all alright and not like people who would be looking for loads of money or anything like that. But the manager said: "We only put on stuff that I like and that's what the gigs are here for". That really put me off, and then there was other stuff as well, [for example] trying to book a gig in the 13th Note, you would email folk in and there would just be no response at all.

Several of these problems could now be resolved through the various contacts that the collective had developed over time. For example, Alistair from *Divorce* had started working at the 13th Note and he was responsible for the monthly gig schedule. This made the venue more accessible to WSP.[79] The choice of a venue was often dictated by other considerations such as accessibility of the area or the existence of an installed sound-system. Thus, one of the generator-powered outdoor events was held next to a subway station, which made it more likely for people to attend. The absence of a sound-system could sometimes be balanced out by the lack of a hire fee, which was considered more important; in which case, however, WSP would have to carry their own sound equipment to the venue and back. The cost of hiring a venue was a determinant factor. Peter explained to me that:

> None of us wants to put much money into paying out for a big venue and we don't really want to see touring bands not being able to pay for petrol to get to the next gig or to eat that day. If we put on gigs in places that were more expensive then we wouldn't be able to pay bands as much. It seems that most of the gigs we're putting on is about making sure that everybody gets a bit of money for the trouble than us taking a cut.

The absence of a hire fee most of the time overshadowed the lack of equipment, but alcohol-related legislation inhibited minors from attending these events, which had

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[79] Peter refers to past experiences. Various of my informants stressed that 13th Note was a welcoming venue and I attended an array of DiY music events there during my research. Mono had also started hosting free gigs every Tuesday featuring a number of musicians and bands affiliated with the DiY network. This was Michael's initiative from *Errors*, who worked in the premises.

emerged as an additional issue for WSP.[80] The collective also expressed their concern regarding sound levels when events took place in unconventional spaces, such as the Maryhill community centre. Despite the abrupt ending of that gig, 'respecting the neighbours' seemed to be a priority for WSP. Peter articulated this view as follows:

> The most important thing is just not to disturb neighbours and basically limit the amount of complaints that we can get about it. We want to put on music but we don't want to be putting on music for us and annoying everyone else along the way.

Their overall approach to performance spaces fulfilled not only an aesthetic desire, but a practical necessity. These were not mutually exclusive, because music had the power to transform *any* space. In other words, a 'venue' was constituted and framed by the performance and not vice versa; it was constructed *musically* (Stokes 1994). This is how Iain described WSP's general approach:

> We think that if the bands are there, then it's going to be good anyway because they're good bands, so it doesn't really matter about the venue as much as people think. Maybe the sound might not be as good but it's more about the kind of energy of the band or the performance – the space doesn't matter.

It is worth noting though, that certain venues were *a priori* rejected for reasons ranging from their perceived 'bad vibe' and aggressive security staff, to the disinterested attitude of regular customers (some of whom would unavoidably end up in the audience out of curiosity). I believe that a 'typology' of music venues (e.g. Kronenburg 2012) fails to account for the constellation of practical considerations, aesthetic judgements, symbolic exclusions and fluid spatialities involved in the collective's approach to performance

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[80] 'All-ages' gigs emerged in the Washington D.C. hardcore punk scene in the 1980s. Minors were not allowed in the premises where alcohol was sold and consumed and where hardcore punk gigs normally took place. However, another D.C. law inhibited music venues from denying entrance to minors. Consequently, their hands had to be marked with an 'X' in order to distinguish minors from individuals that could legally drink. Haenfler describes how this engendered an attitude of abstaining from alcohol not only as a legal obligation but as a *right*, and how the 'X' was transformed from a stigma to a marker of pride even for individuals who were allowed to purchase alcohol (2006: 7-8). This eventually gave rise to the 'straight edge' movement, which was opposed to punk's nihilistic attitude. Its basic tenets were complete abstinence from substances such as alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs, as well from sexual promiscuity. The movement gradually developed an orientation towards animal rights and environmental concerns, and veganism became a widespread practice.

spaces. The outdoor gigs that the collective initiated with the help of the newly acquired electricity generator seem to exemplify this approach.

The sites were characterized by their *inbetweenness*, in the sense that they were not recognized, delineated spaces with static identities. 'Places have space between them' says Cresswell (2004: 8), and it was in these ill-defined spaces and inner city wastelands that the generator-powered gigs happened. The musical articulation and transformation of the ambiguous and heterogeneous nature of these 'non-places' (Augé 1995) or 'any-space-whatevers' (Deleuze 1989: 5) marked their transition from disconnected spaces to a meaningful places, by foregrounding musical performance as the process through which spaces 'become'. These fluid, 'gelleable mobile' spaces (Tironi 2010) were transformed into places as they were progressively experienced and endowed with value, thus acquiring definition and meaning (Tuan 1977: 136).

The outdoor gigs, moreover, point to the contested process of spatial appropriation as opposed to the owner/customer logic characterizing the booking of normal venues. Ironically, outdoor gigs mainly reflected WSP's attempt to overcome the practical issues described above. For Colin, the generator embodied 'a sort of a dream of doing a gig wherever you want, whenever you want'. There were indeed certain practical advantages in this romantic aspiration. For example, the effort involved in the organization of those gigs was minimal and the only related costs had to do with the fuel needed for the generator. Furthermore, the long waiting time for bands performing in a conventional venue was eliminated. Besides, people arriving at the scene were expected to make only a minimal 'donation' to cover the cost of petrol. Finally, outdoor gigs were inclusive in both a symbolic and a concrete sense. There were instances in which passersby stopped to listen to the music, while there were no barriers whatsoever as to who could attend, such as minors.

The process was not totally free from issues or concerns. To begin with, the collective had to be particularly careful with regards to the choice of an appropriate outdoor space.

Rain could very easily impose a cancellation, therefore some of the gigs took place underneath a bridge. Then, the chosen spaces had to be away from busy city areas, but this had to be dealt with by simultaneously ensuring that spaces were easily accessible: for this reason, settings near underground stations were preferred. Last but not least, the collective had to ensure that the gig would not last long enough for the police to appear and terminate the event.[81] The tactic employed was temporal, both in the sense of brevity, and in relation to the days and times of these events, for example Sunday afternoons.

It seemed that the ease with which the collective managed to put on these events mattered most, rather than a desire to upset or subvert. According to Cohen:

> The production of place through music is always a political and contested process and music has been shown to be implicated in the politics of place, the struggle for identity and belonging, power and prestige (1995: 445).

However, I would be careful not to overstate the political intentions embedded in this practice (see Chapter 6). Again, the transient nature of these events matches Peter thought that it was 'really nice to just be able to come to a gig, just to show up somewhere and see a couple of bands and then go off again and that's it'. After all, in my experience and knowledge, WSP had never used tickets or guest lists for their gigs,[82] something that enhanced the spontaneous and ephemeral character of *all* WSP events. This was due to the small-scale nature of the gigs that rendered ticketing unnecessary. However, Stuart from *Cry Parrot* disagreed, which was an indication of his shift away from a DiY outlook (Chapter 5).

Yet this argument sidesteps a much more important issue by obscuring the practice's *persistence*. As MacKay notes, we should pay attention to the permanent

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[81] This was sometimes a conscious strategy in flat gigs too. Alex from *Ultimate Thrush* (see also Chapter 4) once recounted how the police had entered the flat while his band was performing. Because the flat was packed, by the time the police reached the stage the gig had finished.

[82] This stands in stark contrast with dominant music industry practices. See Fonarow (2006: 128-137)

transformations that such practices could potentially effect rather than celebrate them as acts of momentary transgressions, or, at least, to acknowledge that their repeated occurrence exhibits some form of constancy (1996: 156). Despite the immanent nature of many of the collective's practices, what consolidated their position on the local musical map was the repetitive character of the musical routes that WSP members followed.

These 'pathways' (Finnegan 1989) invoked the collective's musical trajectories but also embodied actual and well-known urban tracks. For example, all four members would take part in the distribution of flyers and posters by cycling or walking around the city.[83] Posters and flyers mainly appeared in music venues, art spaces and university campuses. When Iain joined Colin as a poster distributor, this process would take place during their work hours and Iain had estimated that they managed to put up two to three times more the amount of posters than they used to do. 'To walk is to lack a place' (de Certeau 1984: 103), but 'onward movement is itself a return' (Ingold & Vergunst 2008: 17). This continuing, repetitive 'coming and going' is embodied within urban pathways that engender a sense of place that is characterized by 'routes rather than roots' (Cresswell 2004: 53). It follows that localities are not bounded geographical entities but are experienced as 'spatio-temporal events' (Massey 2005: 130).

The transience of these events though is balanced by the enduring and lasting presence of musical pathways. As Finnegan notes, they provide a sense of spatio-temporal *structure* in people's lives through the repetitive enactment of music-related practices taking place across the city (1989: 317). Musical routes were complemented by many others, relating to band practice and performance. But these routes were only one set of urban pathways among many. However, musical pathways were of high importance compared to others: Corey had quit his well-paid job as a graphic designer and Iain was trying to get by on as little money as possible. Both of them, in common with Colin and

[83] Apart from a promotional strategy, poster distribution was a symbolic practice of spatial contestation and appropriation (see also Chapter 5).

Peter, valued flexibility as a prerequisite for making music and perceived work as being of lesser importance – an enabling rather than restricting factor with regards to their musical aspirations. It was evident, then, that music-related activities defined and ordered a great deal of their everyday lives with their urban existence and social identity being structured largely around these musical routines.

It is not difficult to discern from the collective's circumstances that the enactment of music involved not only the appropriation of urban space, but of time. According to Lefebvre, 'appropriated' time:

> [F]orgets time, during which time no longer counts (and is no longer counted). It arrives or emerges when an activity brings plenitude...This activity is in harmony with itself and with the world. It has several traits of self-creation or of a gift rather than of an obligation or an imposition come from without. It is in time: it is a time, but does not reflect on it (Lefebvre 2004: 76-77).

We may thus draw a link with the practice of sharing and argue that appropriated time as a modality of music-making is a second aspect of its inherent 'goodness' (MacIntyre 1981). For Lefebvre it is precisely the appropriation of space and time, which allows a group to imprint its own 'rhythm', effect changes and forge transformations onto urban reality (1996: 105, 2004: 14). The spatio-temporal nature of pathways, articulated through the cyclical repetition of urban practices calls attention to the mutuality of urban space and time in everyday music practice. This reciprocal relation requires its rhythm: 'Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm' (Lefebvre 2004: 15). The rhythmical nature of music practice further points to a plural definition of the everyday not only as 'mundane', but also as repetitive, something that *occurs* every day (Elden 2004: ix). In turn, the complexity and pluralism of music practices convey the polyrhythmia of intertwined musical pathways and urban life more generally.

The collective's rhythms were patterned in the use and appropriation of urban space and time. The use of temporalized spaces in the form of rhythmic practice underscored their

effort to inhabit the locality (Lefebvre 1996, 2003). The repetitive actions or urban 'tactics' (de Certeau 1984) of spatial appropriation and transformation through music foregrounded and enacted their right to the city. Nowhere was this desire to inhabit the city more apparent than in the collective's eagerness to occupy their own dedicated space. Iain told me that this space would be like a 'production centre' where different individuals and bands could rehearse, record, put on gigs and print relevant material. The collective had unsuccessfully attempted to attract relevant funding from the Scottish Arts Council. The cost of such a project was prohibitive and the only viable option was to register WSP as a charity in order to acquire a space from the Council and minimize relevant taxes. A second option would be to shift their focus to what they termed as 'dodgy' areas of the city where renting a property was much cheaper. Peter believed that ideally they would initiate a partnership with a warehouse (see also Chapter 5) that would be used by the collective outside business hours. In any case, they were looking for spaces in non-residential areas in order to avoid noise disturbance. Up until the end of my fieldwork, the collective had been unable to secure such a space. Yet this aspiration reflects in a concrete manner music's persistence and the collective's continuous commitment to music-making. It also echoes Lefebvre's remark:

> [T]he *right to the city* is like a cry and a demand...The *right to the city* cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed *right to urban life* (1996: 158).

The right to the city emerges, therefore, as an ethical right and an ethical demand for the use of urban resources. It is also a right to be 'acknowledged', as revealed by Colin's words above. Inhabiting the city concerned the ways in which urban spaces were lived and transformed by the collective but also implied the group's gradual integration or, to put it differently, their localization (Chapter 6). Therefore, contested spaces should not necessarily be perceived as the sites of direct conflict, opposition or resistance (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 18), but as examples of people's sustained efforts to negotiate on their own terms and 'rhythmically' alter from within the urban contexts they inhabit. Music practices as a cluster of related tactics were a catalyst in this process.

3.7 The Raw and the Cooked

On a sunny autumn Sunday morning I took the train to Glasgow. Transmission was hosting a series of presentations by self-organized communities in Glasgow and beyond, spanning practices that ranged from political activism to music and art. WSP were scheduled to give a talk, so I was anticipating it with great interest.[84] To my disappointment, the collective did not attend the event and failed to give prior notice to the organizers. The reason for the cancellation was that they could not decide upon the content of their presentation. When I brought this up in a discussion I had with Colin later on, he explained that part of the reason why they refrained from presenting was their lack of a specific agenda.

WSP would often declare their general lack of 'proper' organization. Some gigs were announced just a few days in advance, even on the day. Others were cancelled or some of the bands would drop out from the line-up last minute. I have mentioned the lack of tickets, while most gigs would kick off with a considerable delay. WSP had ceased the publication of financial breakdowns,[85] while, once, due to a miscalculation they ended up taking money from a gig's proceeds. Moreover, for a considerable period the online shop was not properly managed, which meant that customers would not receive their records until weeks after placing an order. Despite all of this, from an insider's point of view being 'disorganized' was not necessarily a negative quality, because organization did not matter in and of itself. Iain expressed this as follows:

> I think we try to keep it relaxed. If you go to a gig that a big promoter is putting on, you've got all the organization – stuff that is going on that stretch you from the fact that you're there to have a good time and play your music – and if you're thinking about running by a strict time-line it can be detrimental to your performance.

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[84] The collective were acquainted with members of the Transmission committee, such as Ewan and Paul (Paul was also a core member of *Nuts and Seeds*) who were in a band called *Triple School* and had released music on WSP. According to Ewan, *Triple School* and *Plaaydoh* used to be 'partner bands' (Lowndes 2010: 402).

[85] The reason for publishing financial breakdowns after gigs was 'transparency', according to the collective.

In this sense, 'disorganization' can be seen as a tactic to 'get things done' while countering the inflexibility of well-organized institutions (Schaumberg 2013: 379, 399). The lack of financial reward, the small-scale character of their practice, as well as the notion of being disorganized would make it tempting to argue that WSP were amateurs. If this is so, then how were they distinguished by professionals? Stebbins defines 'serious leisure' as:

> The systematic pursuit by an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer of an activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge (1992: 3).

Thus, for amateurs the boundaries are blurred by a serious approach both towards their day jobs and their leisure activities. The former is a source of income, while the latter is 'merely' a meaningful activity. However, having a main source of livelihood still does not provide a clear distinction. The concept of 'work' is deeply problematic because it does not take into account, for example, the part-time nature of much musical activity or the fact that work can be defined not only in terms of income but also of self-fulfillment. Furthermore, as I have shown, 'work' and 'leisure' overlapped, becoming blurred and ultimately redundant in practice. Therefore, the overall sense of confusion stems primarily from a perspective that narrowly defines work and simultaneously attempts to squeeze musical activity within a leisure framework. A great deal of WSP practices were neither work nor leisure, but a crucial component of their everyday social life and personal identity (Turino 2008: 231).[86]

Crucially, a conceptual distinction fails to capture the musicians' own conceptions of professionalism and amateurism. Indeed, these terms may have multiple meanings and they may 'suggest social status and local affiliation rather than just financial, or even purely musical, evaluation' (Finnegan 1989: 16). For example, professional musicians may derogatorily describe music of which they disapprove as 'amateur' (Cottrell 2004:

[86] Cohen notes that in Liverpool, music was largely seen as a 'legitimate career' path that was not necessarily opposed to a '"serious" occupation', while most individuals engaged in music-making for other factors (1991: 3).

10). Gillett (2000) has shown that these terms can be inverted and that in the past, London-based professional musicians carried the stigma of subjugation, while amateurs were associated with financial independence and thus freedom to develop their musical inclinations. Consequently:

> [The] "obvious" amateur/professional distinction turns out to be a complex continuum with many different possible variations. The same people can be placed at different points along this line in different contexts of different stages of their lives. Some *were* clearly at one or other end of their continuum, but the grey area in the middle in practice made up a large proportion – perhaps the majority – of local musicians (Finnegan 1989: 14).

Merriam argues that in the context of ethnomusicological studies 'professionalism seems to run along a continuum from payment in occasional gifts at one end to complete economic support through music at the other' (1964: 125). According to Cottrell, being paid to perform is not only important to the musicians' economic well-being but it is a symbol of belonging to a specific community, as well as 'a significant component of their own self-conception' (2004: 12). This distinguishes them both from other practitioners along Finnegan's continuum, but also from non-musicians. An important characteristic of this continuum though is the interdependence of practitioners along its length, evident in the fact that amateur activities within the locality provide the 'essential background for the more "professional" music world' (Finnegan 1989: 18). The history of local music attests to that (Chapter 1), and later on I will elaborate on what seems an inherent paradox of DiY, which partly derives from this interdependence, essential to both sides (Chapter 6).

Therefore not only are these classifications complex and the outcome of historical and cultural circumstances, but they are conceptually impoverished when they are not informed by the reality on the ground. The fact that the collective certainly did not frame or articulate their practice in terms of professionalism or amateurism confirms this, but also Peter's reflection on his experience:

> The idea that we are amateurs...Having worked into a pub where they do stuff on that kind of business level – where they're employing somebody to put on a gig and put up the posters and so on – I honestly don't really see the differences. They are very minimal and, if not, most of the time the actual interest from people that are booking the gigs – because they are booking it as a job – is zero. They'll hang about until the doors open and then they're away you know? As long as everything goes smoothly and the agreements with the bands have been met, then that's it. *And that, I would say, is far more amateur* (emphasis added).

In the Afghan context, Baily (1988) notes that music practitioners that are considered 'cooked' or professionals are the ones who have special music knowledge, as opposed to the 'raw' amateurs. The latter, however, 'could even find a virtue in their own shortcomings as musicians' as means not to dispel but *reinforce* their amateur status (ibid.: 118-119). Similarly, following the current terminology we could say that WSP were not decidedly amateurs, but *deliberately* amateurs, embracing an aesthetic of simplicity and familiarity (Chapters 6). Etymologically the term 'amateur', from the Latin *amator*, conveys a 'lover', someone who does it for love, not for money. However, the relation between DiY practice and money could be perceived as intrinsic but also highly contingent and evolving (Chapters 5 & 6). WSP had not written off the possibility of making a living out of music. So it was neither 'love' nor 'income' from paid work that could determine their status as professionals or amateurs but, rather, the ethical significance of the terms.

This is evident in Peter's words, which demonstrate that what distinguished WSP from professionals was their caring attitude towards the bands they hosted in their events or on their label. Peter had substantial experience in working as a sound engineer for other promoters' events and he would recount how they regularly complained about the bands that they were putting on – and whose music they were supposedly into – and talked about musicians in a really negative way. Peter would not choose to host a band whose music he did not appreciate, because this would have the effect of him being uninterested in the event. But the collective believed that the ongoing exploitation of bands was their own fault too, in the sense that the majority of musicians who had the ambition to 'make it' could fall prey to corporate interests. This is what set WSP bands apart from several other local musicians.

The historical degeneration of professions to mere 'business' and the emerging suspicion and accusations of 'greed' (Robertson 2001) provide some background and underscore the ethical implications of the terms. In the case of WSP we cannot speak about 'degrees of professionalism' (Finnegan 1989: 17), but of situated and distributed ethical action. It would be more accurate to argue that, rather than WSP following a 'professional' career marked by material increments, they had embarked on a 'moral career' (Fortes 1987) punctuated by ethical practices. Their lack of relevant terminology was thus substituted by considerable reflection on the nature of effort, commitment and dedication as ethical skills in making music, releasing records and organizing events.

Sustaining commitment is profoundly ethical according to Lambek (2010b). Actions are rarely consistent, however, and WSP practices pay testament to this. For Lambek, it is the acknowledgement of one's failure to keep promises based on mutually agreed ethical criteria that ultimately matters. The collective's acknowledgement of their own shortcomings (e.g. being 'disorganized') is ethical as a self-critique (see Schaumberg 2013: 399), but also notable in its recognition of the 'other'. In turn, this reflects the collective's desire to be recognized by other music actors. In this chapter I have demonstrated that this was expressed as a demand, but can also be recast as the other's (as well as our own) ethical obligation. Taylor's work on the 'politics of recognition', and specifically on the recognition of the 'other' as an ethical obligation, is instructive here (1992; see also Conclusion).

The notion of learning as an ongoing process cut across the complex amateur-professional continuum. Doing things collaboratively or playing in bands were each invaluable sources of information about the conventions and constraints of the music industry. This knowledge was greatly facilitated by one's direct participation in the collective's practices. The urban environment of Glasgow afforded the social and musical interactions and exchanges that promoted such learning and culminated into an ethics of sharing. Sharing in this instance represented a resolutely temporal phenomenon. As Widlok has shown (2004), sharing as an intrinsically ethical practice

has its own temporality geared towards the here-and-now. However, being able to sustain this practice by committing to it adds a long-term dimension, which is critical for its ethical resonance (Lambek 2010b: 47).

I argued that time cannot be disentangled from urban space and the ways in which people experience the locality. These elements, I believe, are best captured by the idea of urban pathways. Pathways have spatial or habitual referents but also temporal ones in the sense that they are repetitive, rhythmical practices. Another temporal aspect of sharing then, is that it becomes important in its spatio-temporal perpetuation, which in turn shapes urban musical pathways. Ultimately, the virtue of sharing can be seen as the practical foundation of DiY music-making, the ethical nexus where different musical pathways meet and a persistent practice within a multi-temporal and polyrhythmic city. It represents a re-evaluation of the plural urban routes within a specific context, where mobility constantly 'triggers new attempts at fixity' (Connell & Gibson 2003: 46)

Making music *happen* was predicated upon such practices of sharing and the synergy of individuals. These practices along with additional tactics such as 'disorganization', as well as irony and ambiguity in the imaginative use of band and institutional names, allowed the collective to express themselves musically, assert this right spatially and position themselves ethically in the city. Outdoor gigs, but also a series of events in 'unconventional' venues momentarily imposed small gaps in the stream of everyday urban rhythms. If 'the extra-everyday rhythms the everyday and vice versa' (Lefebvre 2004: 95), then 'difference' is equally the outcome of rhythms. Repetition and difference are two sides of the same coin, because rhythms never repeat the same action absolutely and indefinitely but subordinate this sameness to 'alterity and even alteration' (ibid.: 79). This has repercussions for DiY music-making in the city and for urban life more generally.

The orchestra's performance exemplifies many of the points discussed in this chapter. It shows, for example, the intimacy of WSP gigs and the friendly and relaxed atmosphere

that people would encounter in this context. It further demonstrates the amount of effort and cooperation involved in the organization and execution of these events, as well as the ongoing contestation, appropriation and transformation of urban spaces into sonic territories. I would also like to stress the *musical* component of these practices. The electric guitar orchestra brings music itself into dizzying focus by exposing its sensory capacity to weave human bodies into a sonic stream that precedes cognition and articulates its own space-time continuum. One of the contexts in which the affective qualities of music emerge is when one is exposed to the sound for the duration of live performance. These characteristics are also embedded within ethical practices involving bodily exercises or techniques on the part of the performers, as well as relating to audience behaviour. The following chapter takes the ethics of embodied musicality as its main theme in relation to *Divorce*.

Chapter 4: Divorce

4.1 Affect and the Sensuous Embodiment of Ethics

A subject feels – that is, he is able to affect and be affected.

(Cobussen & Nielsen 2012: 112)

In the previous chapter the consideration of the urban character of WSP practices precluded me from attending to the somatic engagements, the corporeal entanglements and their immediacy in music as bodily practice. In this chapter, therefore, I will discuss the centrality of the palpable body in musical creativity and reception. For this I turn to *Divorce*, a band affiliated with the local DiY network. *Divorce* are particularly well-suited to my ethnographic exploration due to the intensity characterizing their sound and performances, both of which necessitated and imposed a multi-sensory immersion on band members and audiences alike.

Arguing the salience of the body in music practice is nothing new. Blacking (1979) has noted that music presents a 'special' mode of bodily organization and control that sets it apart from other social activities. He claims that music mediates between the biological complexities of bodies and cultural bodily arrangements, and that despite its modeling and constraining capacities:

> People choose to invoke and invent music, rather than other systems of action that may put fewer restrictions on their freedom of choice, because music-making offers an intensity of feeling and quality of experience that is more highly valued than some other social activities (Blacking 1979: 8).

Blacking's assertion is useful to my arguments in multiple respects. First, it postulates the body's importance to the study of music-making. Second, it suggests that the felt intensity of music is precisely what underscores, third, the paradox whereby a restricted, regulated body is the means to experiential richness. Finally, says Blacking, compared to other activities, music-making has a higher value in people's lives to the extent that

actors choose and are willing to accept the delimitation of their own freedom in order to achieve the quality of a social experience. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to debunk these points by advancing the proposition that corporeal registers are fundamental to the consideration of music-making as a practice of relational ethical self-fashioning. In doing so, I will employ insights from anthropological approaches to the senses (e.g. Classen 1993, 1997; Howes 2003; Seremetakis 1994), ethics (e.g. Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005) as well as the notion of 'affect' (e.g. Connolly 2002; Massumi 2002).

The sensory constellations comprising *Divorce*'s music practices call for a sensuous examination of music. This should go beyond both a visual paradigm pervading textual approaches to sound and a distinction between visual and aural cultures (e.g. Ong 1969). After all, '[a]n ocular-centric culture need not necessarily result in a more logo-centric one' (Hsu 2008: 435). While I embrace the argument for the ethnocentric character and inadequate properties of vision in the acquisition of knowledge, I do not proceed to postulate an 'acoustemology' (Feld 1996) or affirm the need for a 'sounded anthropology' (Samuels *et al* 2010). Rather, attention is required to the *interplay* of sensory stimuli and responses in any given environment (Classen 1993: 136).

Rather than treating the senses as materially embedded inward capacities and passive receptors of external stimuli, I perceive bodies as dynamic and sensually rich interfaces that have the capacity to articulate a 'sensorium', that is, a sensorialized social space (Chau 2008). As such, music performances become sensoriums enabling the mutual production of sensory worlds through active participation. It follows that relationships within the band and between the band and its audiences were *sensuously* articulated. Although my approach is sensitive to issues of embodiment, the focal point of my argument is the enactment of these relationships. I seek to examine the specificity of the practices and techniques, in short, the *work* that music-making entails and how these

sensed activities elicit particular embodied sensibilities and aptitudes. Consequently, my account diverges from phenomenological approaches to the body (e.g. Csordas 1990).[87]

As Seremetakis notes, the senses do not only inhabit the autonomous body as a form of internal experience but are also embedded within a relation between the body and the materials that surround it (1994: 6). Such an approach, Hirschkind explains, 'moves us away from a mentalist understanding that locates experience in a silent interior toward one that places it in a body practically engaged with the world', in which 'perception is not a moment of passivity but an act, a performance that links the sensory sedimentations of the past to the horizon of present actions' (2006: 29).

From an affective standpoint the 'body is by no means a *tabula rasa*' (Mazzarella 2009: 292). Corporeal mnemonics are the sites as well as the nexus of the affective 'intensities' that condition sensory fields. The traces of these presubjective intensities both depend upon and hone bodily sensations within a complex of relationships between the body and its environment. For Massumi (2002), whose influential elaboration of affect (Spinoza's *affectus*) is situated within Deleuze's philosophy, affects are autonomic visceral responses, intensities that are presubjective and asocial without being presocial. The body does not only absorb pulses but 'it infolds *contexts*' (ibid.: 30), traces of past actions as incipient future potentials.

Affects are impingements that are *felt* but not yet cognitively processed; they register nonconscious traces, but not unconscious, because the body is concrete but unmediated, real but abstract, that is, 'virtual'. It is caught up in ongoing movement and becoming. In contradistinction to a 'discursive' body, affects point to bodily resonances that are not always semiotically expressed because 'the skin is faster than the word' (ibid.: 25). As such, affects are bodily tendencies, corporeal sensations and movements that precede cognition and do not presuppose a thinking, intentional subject. Rather, subjective

[87] For a recent overview of anthropological approaches to phenomenology, see Desjarlais and Throop (2011). For a classic phenomenological account of musical skill development, see Sudnow (2001 [1978]).

experience is epiphenomenal, it is what emerges when the unstructured affective potential in all its abstractness or indeterminacy – its immanence – is selected, reduced or 'qualified':

> The autonomic tendency received secondhand from the body is raised to a higher power to become an activity of the mind. Mind and body are seen as two levels recapitulating the same image/expression event in different but parallel ways, ascending by degrees from the concrete to the incorporeal, holding to the same absent center of a now spectral – and potentialized – encounter (Massumi 2002: 32).

Affect evades cultural logics and discursive articulations and displaces the onset of social life from the bounded cognitive subject to the sensuous, affective body. Affects are thus differentiated from emotions:

> Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. (ibid.: 28).

Emotions represent the most intense 'capture' of affect. This underscores the latter's 'autonomy', namely that it does not belong to an individual body but escapes confinement. As Shouse puts it: 'Feelings are *personal* and biographical, emotions are *social*, and affects are *prepersonal*' (2005: para. 2). It follows that affect offers an analytical tool with which to examine these 'proto-thoughts' or 'visceral modes of appraisal' (Connolly 1999: 27) that are lodged into the body beyond the threshold of conscious awareness and discursive meaning. Contrary to the psychologistic and individualistic connotations of 'emotion',[88] affects provide the means to think beyond the autonomous subject and his or her body as the incarcerator of inward feelings and the disseminator of outward emotions.

In invoking Massumi's terminology I do not wish to take affect at face value, but rather to interrogate its usefulness and applicability in a musical-anthropological context. Nor

[88] As Richard and Rudnyckyj note, the anthropology of emotion still bears the connotations of inwardness and personalism (2009: 61).

do I intend to embrace a biological determinism. After all, the astute critiques of Leys (2011) and Papoulias & Callard (2010), among others, have exposed the peculiar links between affect and how psychologists have conceptualized emotions. The rootedeness of a sharp dualism between body and mind that pervades affect as it has been theorized by Massumi, Connolly and other influential proponents, has also been highlighted. These scholars, according to this argument, have somewhat turned Descartes on his head in their effort to dispel the spectre of intentionality and an ideologically-bound subject. Although the intentionality/non-intentionality debate is a false problem for reasons I discuss in Chapter 6, I hereby attend to the criticism about the 'mindless' body implied by affect.

What is the benefit of utilizing the notion of affect ethnographically? Instead of embracing the vitalist assumptions of affect, I focus, following Mazzarella, upon the movement between affective incipience and its rationalization, between the intensity of affective potential and its 'qualification' (2009: 304). It is in the resonances between the body with itself and other bodies, as well as in the transitions occurring between body and mind within a richly sensorialized environment, that the preconditions of ethical becoming reside. My ethnographic analysis of affect inhabits the space where sensation, perception and action coalesce. Rather than tracing the emergence of perception, I seek to highlight the interlinkages of body and mind, affective intensity and ethical action. Specifically, the 'feedback' between emergent affective registers located in the flesh and conscious ethical fashioning. In doing so, I place the bodily capacities enabling music-making alongside musical attributes that equip bodies with ethical sensibilities.

'Emergence emerges', writes Massumi about the relationship between potential and its qualification (2002: 10). It is along the continuous cyclical movement between affect and ethical practice that my ethnography aligns itself. A notion of emotions lacks precisely this self-reflexive capacity of affect, namely the ability of bodies and persons to *affect* and *be affected* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 261; Massumi 1987: xvi, 2002: 15; Spinoza 2006 [c.1674]: 40). This forms the solid empirical basis of my subsequent

analysis. Crucially, I treat affects not as 'objects' that are transmitted, circulated or exchanged among different autonomous bodies (e.g. Brennan 2004), but as *conditions* that enable the formation of relational ethical subjects and within which these subjects-in-becoming circulate (Richard & Rudnyckyj 2009). In essence, then, my aim is to reveal how music not only reflects but also engenders particular ethical identities (Frith 1996c).

My account is thus 'methodological' rather than explanatory. Its explicit aim is to illustrate and bring into focus 'affect' rather than resolve or explicate it. In doing so, I follow Hirsckind's (2006) richly textured ethnographic analysis that does not confront the meaning of affect as such. Similarly, I pay attention to musical sensations as a bodily *modus operandi* that shifts the focus from an exclusively cognitive-ideological understanding of music to sensually-induced pre-reflexive visceral faculties and dispositions. These form the raw substance of ethical work and refinement. Therefore, the perceptual apparatuses of the body and its affinity with material and social contexts are instrumental in the consideration of music-making as an affective experience and ethical action. The body emerges as a tool of ethical self-fashioning insofar as music practices inculcate particular affective potentialities.

In a different ethnographic context, Hirschkind argues that the practice of cassette-sermon listening infused the body with 'latent tendencies of ethical response sedimented within the mnemonic regions of the flesh', while this process involved 'the vocabularies of ethical affect, bodily sensation, and moral actions'; these functioned 'as instruments for objectifying and organizing sensory material, in accord with long-standing discourses on ethical cultivation' (2006: 82-83). Along similar lines, Mahmood, who focuses on the women's mosque movement in Cairo and the moral reform it engenders in the context of the Islamic revival, notes the 'extraordinary degree of pedagogical emphasis' on external behaviour among her informants and the existence of 'an elaborate system of techniques by which the body's actions and capacities can be examined and worked upon, both individually and collectively' (2005: 31). She

concludes that: '*It is the various movements of the body that comprise the material substance of the ethical domain'* (2005: 31, emphasis added). Both scholars draw on Foucault's notion of 'technologies of the self', which:

> [P]ermit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (1997: 225)

By employing these scholars' insights with regards to the deliberate exercises and the implanted bodily sensibilities and potentialities that engender particular ethical subjects, I hope to show that music-making could be perceived as an ethical practice. Musical abilities and affiliations largely depend upon deliberate actions and dispositions that compel actors to submit themselves to training regimes that ostensibly suppress their freedom. I will show how, through their involvement in concrete music practices, *Divorce* as well as audience members sought to fashion ethical selves by adhering to specific bodily norms. These required regulated bodies in accord with ruled patterns of singing, instrument playing and social etiquette.

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An ethnographic account of how *Divorce* were formed on the basis of common musical inclinations will be followed by an exposition of the main music practices in which the band engaged. Among the various activities involved in the functioning of the band, members of *Divorce* privileged live performance as perhaps their most rewarding realm of experience. Although the experience of performing live was exhilarating, it was also daunting and nerve-wracking, especially for Ruth, the vocalist. Rehearsals were perceived as a serious commitment. Above all, rehearsals provided the time and space for band members to compose music by enhancing the sort of camaraderie that was felt during performance. Everyone would participate in the song-writing process by playing simultaneously in the studio and through the incorporation of individual contributions

into a coherent whole. This form of projected egalitarianism defined the shared identity of the band's members.

My ethnographic vignette of a themed house gig-cum-party at which *Divorce* performed will give rise to the discussion of the band's music's sensuous qualities. Their music was imbued with plurosensory meanings and symbolisms stretching beyond sonorous experiences to include tactile, visual and kinesthetic impulses. A section about the ethical work in the form of specific techniques that band members undertook will highlight the bodily conformity that music-making necessitates. Next, I consider audience etiquette and how bodily deportment encouraged the internalization of a contextualized and ethically appropriate behaviour. In my exploration of these variegated actions, I contend that the whole gamut of music practices derives from affective intensities and sensory impingements that represent a *tendency* towards mutual ethical becoming.

4.2 Initiating Divorce

Divorce was initiated by Alistair and Sophie in late 2008. The two founders had been friends since they were teenagers. According to Alistair, the reason for striving to start a band that they would truly enjoy was that a great portion of music coming out of Glasgow was 'too melodic and happy'. *Divorce* sought to do something 'different'. Originally from Fife, Alistair had recently moved to Glasgow from Edinburgh to study Music Management at Stow College whilst working as a booking agent at the 13th Note. Sophie was working at the Captain's Rest.[89] Alistair was a drummer and Sophie played the electric bass.

The band properly took shape once Anna joined them as a guitarist. Coming from a rural place called Lanchester in County Durham, Anna had started her painting and print-making degree at the GSA in 2005, and during the time of my fieldwork she was

[89] Bar and music venue on Great Western Road.

working at an art shop in the East End. She had also been allocated a dedicated studio space in Bridgetoun[90] and had exhibited in local art spaces such as the Glue Factory and the Market Gallery. Before moving to Glasgow Anna used to listen to the music of *Park Attack*, a now-defunct local band. When she arrived in the city, she began attending *Park Attack* gigs, often alone, and it was precisely in this context that Anna gradually became acquainted and developed links with other local musicians.

While studying at the GSA she had attempted to start a band with another young woman who also happened to know Alistair. This did not lead to the formation of a band, yet meeting Alistair was critical to her recruitment to *Divorce*. Apparently, both were interested in the same 'noisy' bands and Anna's musical inclinations had proved incompatible with the other prospective members' preferences. A few months later Alistair called Anna and invited her to join *Divorce*. At the same time, and independent of her meeting Alistair, Anna also regularly attended the weekly club nights that Sophie organized at the Art School, which quite often featured Anna's favourite bands.

The three of them, with the addition of Rory from *Park Attack*, subsequently practiced for a while at the Green Door Studio. Rory's contribution though, who played keyboards and effects, did not seem to fit with the band's musical scope and eventually he left the band. It was around that time that Alistair also met Lucy, an American student who lived in Glasgow, and asked her to join *Divorce* as the second guitarist.[91] Lucy had encountered Alistair at her friend's party where they ended up talking extensively about music. Alistair recruited Lucy on the spot and the following week she joined the band's rehearsals. In a similar way to Anna, Lucy had also become aware of

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[90] Anna's peers at the GSA had set up a studio in the area that featured around twenty small spaces.

[91] When I first met Lucy she was working at the Captain's Rest, but she subsequently switched to an admin position elsewhere. Lucy was originally from Houston, Texas. She had arrived in Glasgow in 2005 to pursue a postgraduate degree in Slavonic Studies after having completed her undergraduate degree in Spanish and Russian at the University of Texas in San Antonio. Her ultimate goal was to travel to Russia, but once she arrived in Glasgow she became involved in local music and was currently planning to stay indefinitely. For Lucy, Glasgow had sparked her interest ever since she was in high school, when she visited the UK for the first time. As she characteristically put it: 'In my heart, I want to stay here, this is the place I want to be'.

the local thriving music networks through frequent attendance of music events. It was when she was directly exposed to live performances that she truly realized her interest in the activities taking place.

That was the initial line-up of *Divorce* and it was only later on, after the four members had composed three instrumental pieces, that Ruth joined the band. The singing component of these compositions was not initially addressed and none of the members were particularly comfortable with singing. Anna had reluctantly volunteered, despite not feeling confident singing and playing the guitar simultaneously. Consequently, the band decided to recruit a vocalist. Ruth was a Glasgow native with an arts background, studying sculpture and environmental art at the GSA while working at Stereo. While at Langside College to do her Highers, Ruth had begun attending music events and eventually became involved in local experimental music. Alistair and Ruth had met through common friends and during a night out, while discussing music, Ruth expressed her interest in starting a band. There is no doubt that Ruth's experience of the local experimental and noise music networks appealed to *Divorce* and she was soon invited to join them. The band provided her with rough recordings of the songs they had already composed and Ruth wrote the lyrics. Her initial shyness and silence soon gave way to aggressively loud vocal performances (see below). She recalls:

> I went to a few practices, but I didn't make a peep for ages because I was so nervous. And then at one point just basically went for it and just started shouting really loud, and the others were like: "Oh my god, what was that sound that just came out!".

The band's full membership allows me to outline certain common characteristics as well as differences between individual band members. To begin with, ages ranged from early twenties to mid-thirties. With the exception of Sophie and Ruth, members originated from places outside of Glasgow, and even of Scotland. They were employed and had pursued or were currently pursuing higher education. In common with WSP, none of the band's members had received substantial formal music training. Anna, for example, was a self-taught guitar player who, as a teenager, would learn basic chords by downloading

guitar tabs off the Internet. Ruth's only singing experience before joining *Divorce* came from her school years, a series of happenings that had left her uncertain of her vocal capabilities. In contrast, Lucy had taken both singing and piano lessons as a child but as a teenager she became interested in the electric guitar, which she learned to play by herself. The band was not the only musical activity in which *Divorce* members were involved and yet it quickly became a critical and habitual part of their lives.[92]

Divorce came into being through a series of encounters that members themselves characterized as 'total chance', 'complete accident', or 'instantaneous', largely the outcome of 'good timing'. However, this seemed to be only part of the story. No doubt 'random', serendipitous encounters contributed to the formation of the band but this process of coming together was not solely the result of luck. First of all, the fact that Anna, Lucy and Ruth ended up in the band after a night out socializing with Alistair was not a simple coincidence. Rather, this form of sociality was conducive to the emergence of music projects but also very common among musicians in Glasgow, where certain pubs and bars stayed open until 3am and where nighttime economy was intimately linked with popular music (Forsyth & Cloonan 2008). As Michael from the band *Errors* put it when he was describing to me the nexus between drinking, socializing, and music: 'This is when all the "magic" happens!'.

I have already examined how the practice of sharing facilitated the development of music networks. In the case of *Divorce*, the formation of the band could be also broadly and partly accounted for by Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital (1984) and, more

[92] Lucy had previously participated in various short-lived bands, but it was her arrival in Glasgow that really triggered her musical creativity. Before joining *Divorce* she had initiated a solo project (occasionally a duo), *Blood of the Bull*, and subsequently teamed up with Iain from WSP in *Phat Trophies* (Chapter 3), where she sang and played the organ. Ruth had been a core member of the close-knit noise music network and she played in *Barbarians*, by beating scrap metal with sticks. The resulting sound was captured by contact microphones and processed through distortion pedals. Ruth also played the guitar in *Palms* with the additional duties of song-writing and singing. By contrast, *Divorce* was Anna's first and only band, although she had formerly practiced with various musicians. Anna hosted a regular show on Subcity Radio (see Chapter 5) and had also started composing electronic music. Sophie and Alistair had both been engaged in diverse music genres and bands throughout the years preceding *Divorce*, but none of those had felt truly rewarding. *Divorce* was Sophie and Alistair's main project. Alistair was also a session musician in addition to offering his drumming skills for Cameron's *Remember Remember*, an essentially solo project (see Chapter 5).

specifically, by Thorton's (1995) contextualized and music-related 'subcultural' capital, which highlights individual status within specific social fields. In light of this, the common artistic affiliations and educational background of several band members had culminated in specific dispositions germane to particular modes of music-making and aesthetic appreciation. This was encapsulated by their common *taste* in music that initially forged relations between members of *Divorce*. The factors that contributed to the formation of the band were also spatially articulated and a grounded perspective would see them circulating in the same music venues, attending similar gigs and socializing within a common network of individuals: their musical pathways coincided (Finnegan 1989). Lucy told me that she had *seen* Alistair but they had never talked before the party.

The specific presence of the art school as a cultural milieu constituted an additional important backdrop to *Divorce*'s story. Of course, it hosted a pool of creative youth who also made music. But particularly pertinent to the *Divorce* story, Anna and Ruth might not have been attracted to Glasgow if not for attending classes at the GSA. Yet being an art school student and playing music in bands did not assume a cause and effect relationship. There was no *direct* link between one's status as an art student and his or her decision to form a band, especially with other GSA peers.

As an illustration, Anna and Ruth were not acquainted before the latter joined *Divorce*,[93] nor were Anna's musical predilections necessarily shared among other GSA students. As mentioned, Anna would initially attend certain music events alone because most of the students in her year had different tastes in music to her own. Somewhat ironically, the art school experience could have an indirect, adverse effect upon music-making as we shall see. Therefore, rather than determining or imposing a particular aesthetic or 'style', it would be more appropriate to argue that art school institutions engender and

[93] This also holds for Anna's relationship with two members of *Ultimate Thrush* (see below), with whom *Divorce* later became closely affiliated. Ruth was discussing with Will and his brother Alex the possibility of forming a band before she joined *Divorce*. *Ultimate Thrush* subsequently recruited Calum, who was studying at the GSA alongside Will.

afford a particular *approach* that is conducive to music-making. This attitude does not insist on a specific 'image' but is honed by and depends upon 'commitment to a working practice, to a mode of learning which assumes the status of lifestyle' (Frith & Home 1987: 28).

In other words, institutional and shaping factors within field dynamics (see also Chapter 2) do not reveal much about taste as an assortment of everyday, *conscious* practices, choices and decisions of musicians, nor do they account for music's sonic presence and effect on this process. Following Hennion (2007), we could say that musical taste does not primarily confer cultural status or distinction but suggests an *activity* that involves participation and reflection. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, musical taste should be perceived as a technology of ethical self-formation rather than a property or attribute of individuals. An account of the experiential levels on which musicians operate may indeed leave room for contingency or randomness. However, by not accommodating for wider factors, social institutions and culturally defined ideas that affect local music-making (Chapter 1), the broader and largely unconscious processes in which these kinds of phenomena emerge, develop, change or dissolve will remain obscure.

Despite the reality that the process of starting a band in Glasgow was not related to some form of determining structure, local circumstances largely facilitated the formation of bands in specific ways and *Divorce* were no exception. Having said this, I do not claim that *Divorce* could be seen as an archetypal Glasgow band nor that such a band ever existed. Rather, I am concerned here with the enactment of musical taste through embodied practices that expressed these ethical dispositions in action, but also how these dispositions were formed and learned through repeated bodily practice.

Sometimes, taste was literally carved *on* human flesh. Alistair had acquired a homemade tattoo on his right bicep: a robot-like head with a speech bubble coming out of its mouth. This was the logo of one of his favourite bands, a 'free-jazz/noise/metal'

band called *The Flying Luttenbachers*. The remainder of this chapter delves ethnographically into the ways in which the band's musical sensibilities were gradually absorbed by their 'skins' and transformed into bodily capacities as well as ethical potentials.[94]

4.3 Music Practices and the Functioning of the Band

4.3.1 Performance

The self-managed character of the band meant that performances were the culmination of a time-consuming process that included carrying the equipment to the venue, setting-up and 'sound-checking'. The web of negotiations and arrangements surrounding instrument transportation, borrowing or sharing were particularly pertinent to Alistair's drum kit. For example, during one of their 2010 tours of England, Alistair was using *Comanechi*'s drum kit, the band with whom *Divorce* were touring. Anna, Sophie and Lucy would normally bring their instruments, effects pedals and, quite often, their own amplifiers, to connect with the venue's PA.

Setting up the equipment consisted of laying the pedals on the floor, plugging in cables and placing amplifiers against the wall or to the side but still facing the audience. Alistair had to assemble the drum kit in front of a stool and screw the plates on their stands. Finally, one or two hand-written playlists would be taped on the floor within each member's line of vision. Depending on the nature of the event and the time at their disposal, *Divorce* would test their equipment and adjust sound levels and other effects on their amplifiers, as well as checking for technical issues. This procedure was supported by a sound engineer, unless the event took place in a flat (see below). With the engineer's assistance *Divorce* pitched their sound at the desired level ensuring that

[94] Among the Gahuku-Gama of New Guinea the notion of 'skin' encompasses the covering of the body, individual behaviour and personality, as well as ethical evaluations, i.e. 'good' or 'bad' skin (Read 1955).

these adjustments enabled them to produce the various and often subtle nuances of their compositions.

The way the band members were organized on stage at gigs was fairly consistent: Alistair would sit in the middle of the stage and towards the back, in between Anna and Lucy. In the first few *Divorce* gigs I attended Anna stood on the left, but she subsequently swapped positions with Lucy. Sophie normally occupied the space in front of Alistair and Lucy, while Ruth, carrying only her microphone, was free to move on and off the stage as she wished. This arrangement had a practical function, namely that Sophie was able to communicate with Alistair during the performance. This was crucial because bass and drums provided the rhythm section that held together the band's compositions. Anna and Lucy could concentrate on playing their guitar parts with Ruth fronting the band and typically attracting most of the audience's attention.

With the exception of themed events, the band did not wear elaborate stage clothing or makeup, although other bands, such as *Ultimate Thrush*, regularly employed hand-made costumes to enrich their performance repertoire. Generally speaking, decisions about clothing and self-presentation were founded upon practical rationale. For example, Alistair wore glasses and would take them off in order to play drums. Ruth *did* wear fancy outfits during the initial stages of the band's life, but eventually realized that she needed comfortable clothes that would endure the intense performances. Her intention was to wear clothes that would not fall apart after one or two gigs, even in light of the expressive intensity of performance that *Divorce* strived for.

Alistair had a dynamic presence that was supported by the spectacular and powerful playing that the drums can facilitate, by affording a greater range of motion as well as a wide variety of gestures. Sophie, however, also engaged in vigorous movement and occasional headbanging. Anna and Lucy had more delicate but still energetic and lively postures. Ruth specifically, as the front-woman, manifested and integrated these performative elements. Her dramatic enactment ranged from crawling on the floor,

jumping around and singing on her knees to lying down and rolling on stage amongst the other members of the band.

Live performance was a distinctively important aspect of the band's operation. However, *Divorce* also used gigs as a 'testing ground' for their tunes.[95] By elaborating on their songs during performances or by building their sets in specific ways, they were able to tease out ideas that informed their subsequent compositions or even altered existing ones. Sometimes, the band would decide to drop specific songs for good.

4.3.2 Rehearsals and Composition

The band met for the first time at the Green Door Studio in the West End. After a short break, Rory's departure and Lucy's addition, *Divorce* reunited at the Q10 Studios in Merchant City before eventually moving to the Arc Studios Glasgow in the Southside. According to Anna, it was the first rehearsal at the Q10 that cemented the band's line-up. *Divorce* still gathered at the Arc during my fieldwork where they practiced every Tuesday for three hours. They moved from Q10 to the Arc because the majority of bands in the former studio played music that stood in stark contrast with *Divorce*'s, whereas the Arc hosted mainly 'noisy' bands. The Arc charged a hire fee of £25-£27 for three hours, which the band would pay weekly. This was the expected charge for hiring studio space in Glasgow, unless bands rented by the month, which was cheaper. For example, *Remember Remember*, for whom Alistair played the drums, rented a converted school hall in Kinning Park.

The process of music-making remained consistent even after Ruth joined the band: lyrics were added to instrumental compositions. Whereas for the first three songs Ruth wrote lyrics for finished pieces, for all subsequent songs she penned the lyrics *in situ*, during the process of music composition. Therefore, whether an opportunity to revisit earlier songs or the main context for the enactment of musical creativity, *Divorce* songs

[95] 'Testing' and the ethical are intimately related. See, for example, Ronell (2005).

were largely the outcome of a collective and 'organic' process. Music was never written down and the band experimented with various ideas, while individual suggestions regularly punctuated the process. Alistair often came up with drum-beats. At other times, Lucy or Anna introduced guitar riffs or Sophie would bring a bass line. However, these musical scaffoldings were manipulated by the rest of the members and twisted to such an extent that the initial idea would be ultimately transformed into a collective novelty. By working around these basic structures through trial and error, the band could spend a whole rehearsal working on a song and polishing it to a satisfactory level.

This improvisatory, but certainly structured and planned, songwriting process was further underpinned by the band's lack of identification with a specific music genre. In essence then, there was no generic formula or ideal to which the band aspired. They did not explicitly seek to write songs that would meet detailed musical criteria. Although this creative freedom sometimes introduced challenges and highlighted the uncertain and open-ended character of composition, the method of discovering the band's desired sound through communal music-making was a concomitant of the fact that individual members felt comfortable and truly enjoyed playing with each other. Instead of trying to push their music towards a specific direction, they opened up their compositions to several potential sonic avenues. Each member's distinctive style of playing notwithstanding, it was exactly this diversity that gave rise to and sealed the final outcome.

Practice time embodied the creative nexus between individual ideas and their collective manipulation. But the music-making process was not limited to three hours per week. The band would also meet after rehearsals or during the week for drinks or to listen to music. These bonding sessions or 'rituals' (Bennett 1980: 76-78) provided the context for discussion and reflection. Furthermore, Alistair regularly forwarded his ideas to the rest of the band ahead of Tuesday practice. *Divorce* never felt that they needed to practice twice a week, something that only happened in preparation for upcoming gigs necessitating the creation of a set.

The increasing familiarity between members, as well as the development of their musical skills *through* band participation, had certainly contributed to their productivity. Practicing and performing live provided a context in which the band decided which songs would be recorded and released and, in turn, release schedules would influence *Divorce*'s songwriting accordingly.

4.3.3 Recording and Releasing Songs

In February 2009 the band recorded their first release, a 10'' vinyl EP. The four songs on the EP were recorded and mixed by Iain of WSP and were subsequently released that June, with a launch party following in July at the Captain's Rest. The band had only formed a few months before and yet the record was not self-released but rather licensed to *Optimo Music*, a local label owned by DJs and club promoters *Optimo* (Chapter 1). *Optimo Music* expressed their interest in releasing *Divorce* songs after Ruth, who was an *Optimo* regular, had invited one of them to attend the band's first gig. *Divorce* were in turn invited to perform at *Optimo*, which was the band's second gig. Ruth recalled the *Optimo* gig as 'the first time we had been pushed outside of our comfort zone as a band'.

Alistair advised me that *Optimo Music* were a small record label, which meant that they barely had the resources to release the record and that they did not own a studio. Nevertheless, he was grateful and felt really lucky that *Divorce* could have such a release so early in their career. The band chose to retain the rights to the music content: once the 500 copies of the record sold out – and later they did – *Optimo* would have to seek the band's consent in order to repress it. Local record shops such as Monorail stocked the record, but it was also made available for sale online, both from the band themselves and from other online music retailers. Almost a year had passed before a split cassette tape with *Ultimate Thrush* surfaced on *MÏLK* in March 2010.[96] The release

[96] London-based DiY record label and music promoter that hosted the London gig of the two bands while on a tour of England in October 2009. That show culminated into the release of the tape.

featured one band per side, and *Divorce* contributed three songs that were again recorded by Iain. The elaborate artwork was created by Will (Figure 4.1), *Ultimate Thrush*'s guitarist (see also Chapter 3).

Figure 4.1: Divorce/Ultimate Thrush split cassette tape cloth cover and insert.[97]

Only 250 copies were made.[98] Once the limited run had sold out they uploaded the music onto the WSP website so that people could access it for free. Each band also provided one of their songs that appeared on the split tape for a compilation that was released that June by a small Canadian record label called *Scotch Tapes*.

In September 2010, *Divorce* launched a third tour of the UK after their second tour in March the same year. That set of shows, on which I followed the band, also featured *Comanechi* from London. The two bands had played live together before, including *Comanechi*'s album launch gig in London the previous December, as well as two shows

[97] Retrieved from http://www.oliverpitt.co.uk/ [Accessed 10 October 2012].

[98] Even Anna was not able to secure a copy of the tape because she forgot to keep one for herself once it was released.

in Scotland a few weeks after that, one in Edinburgh and another at the 13th Note in Glasgow. The tour and a split 10'' vinyl release were announced simultaneously. The 500 copies of the record would be officially released in late September by London's *Merok* record label. There was one song from each band on side A and for side B the bands joined forces for a cover version of *Sonic Youth*'s 'Death Valley '69', recorded again by Iain at the 13th Note.[99] The link between *Divorce* and *Merok* was established through *Comanechi*, who had also released their own album on the label. The 10'' was initially only available to purchase directly from the bands during their tour.

A few months earlier, the band recorded nine songs at the Green Door Studio, which they were planning to release as an LP. Some of these songs were new but *Divorce* also re-recorded some old ones for inclusion in the album. Iain recorded the album but did not participate in the mixing process. The band were not satisfied with the final mix: Anna and Lucy agreed that 'the songs were never fully mixed' and *Divorce* were thinking of recruiting Iain to remix them. The recording took place at the end of June over three days, including mixing. The band could not afford to hire the studio for additional time although they would be forced to do so if they fell behind schedule, paying for the extra time in installments. The recording started on the afternoon of the first day and drum parts were recorded first. According to Alistair he would need three takes for each song: 'One nervy, one proper and one "laggy"'. The guitar and bass parts were recorded on the second day and Ruth did the vocals last. Anna pointed out that they did not need to play the songs several times to record them as each member knew their parts quite well.

Divorce had managed to record their first album but its release was a matter of finding an appropriate label. The day before the recording was scheduled to begin, Alistair informed me that there were two labels that *Divorce* were considering for the release. One was, again, *Merok*. However, the more the band discussed the album with them, the

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[99] This song was originally written by Thurston Moore, *Sonic Youth*'s guitarist, and Lydia Lunch, probably the most well-known no wave figure.

more they started realizing that *Merok*'s policies were incompatible with the band's principles. Alistair, who was the band's main contact with the label, had forwarded them rough mixes of the album. But the label never provided their feedback. In the meantime, *Merok* had emailed Alistair a list comprised of 'a ridiculous amount of demands' that would essentially deprive *Divorce* of their rights to their own music (i.e. a standard recording contract). At the same time, a second label from Milton Keynes called *Fortissimo* expressed their interest, but this plan was abandoned too after the individual who ran the label decided to move to the US.[100] Subsequent internal developments, resulted in the album still remaining unreleased at the time at which I finished my fieldwork.

4.4 'Satanic Toga' House Party

On the last Saturday of August 2010, before leaving home to catch the train to Glasgow I received a tweet from *Divorce*.[101] A 'Satanic toga' house party was to take place that evening. Both *Divorce* and *Ultimate Thrush* would perform live. Colin from WSP and Alistair also notified me of this last-minute event. 'Satanism' was not merely a stylistic choice, but also alluded to the corporeal and sensual elements of the bands' music (see below). As is evident from the following description, the themed event would be a parodic pastiche of Satanic stereotypes, iconography and phraseology:

!!!!!!!!!!TONIGHT!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PRAISE SATAN IN A BEDSHEET

SATANIC TOGA HOUSE PARTY w/ ADDED RITUALS, NOISE, INCANTATIONS, DJs, SNAKE-CHARMERS, BLOOD-LETTING, LIVE BANDS and LOTS OF SWEET BERRY WINE!!!! (bring yr own wine)

ULTIMATE THRUSH and DIVORCE will attempt to invoke the wrath of OUR MASTER BEELZEBUB through the medium of SONG.

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[100] *Fortissimo* had previously released an LP by Peter J. Taylor, the conductor of the electric guitar ensemble in Maryhill (Chapter 3).

[101] Online social media such as Facebook and Twitter were widely used by members of the band for promotional purposes.

DJ GOAT-FACED KILLA shall keep proceedings suitably UNHOLY with music in praise of HE WHO WALKS BACKWARDS.

CHURCH DOORS OPEN AT 10pm

LIVE MUSIC WILL BEGIN AT MIDNIGHT, THE HOUR OF EVIL
(Divorce on first)... so if yr going to see Take A Worm For A Walk Week
you can still pop round.

TOGAS MUST BE WORN.

(If you have no toga, door cover is £6.66 and an inverted crucifix
branded onto yr buttock)

ViIRGINS [*sic*] & WITCHES WELCOME (but will not live through the night)

TO FIND OUT THE LOCATION OF THIS SATANIC CEREMONY TEXT THE
HIGH PRIEST OF THE ANTICHRIST ON

[Mobile Phone Number]

HAIL HAIL HAIL! TOGA TOGA TOGA![102]

I arrived at the main entrance of the tenement where the party was on. John, who played bass in *Eternal Fags*, was waiting outside. He wore a plaster cast on his arm, as a result of which *Eternal Fags* had had to drop out from the *Kaddish* album launch event at the 13th Note earlier that evening.[103] Three flights of stairs led to the first floor flat. The door was open and there was nobody to collect the advertised £6.66 (Satan's) cover charge. At the end of the small but busy corridor there was a spacious room on the left. There, people were standing or sitting on the floor. Most of them were wearing togas and it seemed that they had put a lot of effort into dressing up. As I entered the room I saw Harry, who was DJ-ing for the night.[104] On the long walls of the room, there were large pieces of paper cut and elaborately sketched in line with the event: a large skeleton on the left, and opposite a large drawing of an erect, bull-like creature with wings, framed by two white inverted crosses.

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[102] Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/events/149680788392953/ [Accessed 14 May 2011].

[103] John subsequently left the band and Colin and Iain continued as a duo (Chapter 3). Before heading to the party I attended a gig organized by the DiY music collective *This Is Our Battlefield*, where *Kaddish*, a Dundonian band, launched their new record.

[104] Harry worked in Monorail.

This figure was overlooking a drum kit in between speakers with bottles on them serving as candle-holders. Additional musical equipment was placed around the drum kit – guitars, amplifiers, cables and effects pedals. Song playlists were attached on the floor in front of the drum kit. Harry was playing loud guitar music and people were dancing. The whole concept seemed to be very well thought out and executed considering time constraints. I spotted Iain and Colin from WSP and went to join them. After a while, Alex came in and I asked him how I could get my toga on (I had brought a bed sheet and pins).[105] He introduced me to two of his friends who took me to another room and within two minutes they were able to make a perfect toga using just two pins.

Divorce, who had arrived in the meantime were sound-checking as it was almost midnight. Sophie, the bassist, was dressed as a witch, wearing white makeup and two black patches around her eyes. Anna and Lucy were wearing long, hooded black capes and had covered their faces with fake blood and Satanic symbols, such as pentagrams and inverted crosses. Ruth's face, hands and upper chest were also covered in fake blood (Figure 4.2). Alistair was missing, despite the fact that I had been chatting to him earlier on. He was dressed up as Jesus.

Divorce members started to get impatient and were asking his whereabouts. Sophie, Anna, and Lucy were strumming their instruments, repeating the same chords, partly to check the sound quality and volume and partly to signify that their set was due to begin. This recurring, abrasive and loud electric sound that was slowly but steadily building up into a wall of noise enhanced the palpable tension, which was further intensified by the unbearable heat and humidity in the room. The space was now packed and the audience had surrounded the band, with several people standing in between *Divorce* members.

Ruth, in front of the drum kit, was holding her microphone sorting out its long cable while trying to conceal her apparent nervousness. Sophie was standing next to her. When Alistair finally entered the room he was wearing a mask with long hair and beard

[105] Alex was the drummer of *Ultimate Thrush*. He was playing drums in seven local bands.

Figure 4.2: Ruth at the 'Satanic toga' house party.

and was covered in red body paint (Figure 4.3). He took a seat behind his drum kit, in between Anna and Lucy, and the band immediately began their set.

I was standing very close to the band, receiving the full force of their amplified sound unfiltered by other people's bodies. This made me realize that I had left my earplugs at home. Ironically, it was the initial experience of a *Divorce* performance that had convinced me to purchase my first pair of earplugs.[106] Witnessing *Divorce*'s set tonight was a rather visceral experience and their carefully crafted noise had a profound physical effect. Considering the suffocating heat and the total lack of free space in the room, the band's sonic onslaught clashed with the mass of perspiring bodies in the audience by inducing a simultaneously unifying and claustrophobic effect.

[106] Although the music was loud and guaranteed tinnitus (and prolonged exposure possibly ear damage), *Divorce* did not use earplugs. This was understandable because filtering the sound meant that the band would not be able to perceive the full range of frequencies they were playing, in their effort to control the final sonic output.

Figure 4.3: Alistair at the ‘Satanic toga’ house party.

Apart from Lucy, who was somewhat trapped between Sophie, Alistair’s drums and the speakers, the band stayed mobile for the best part of the set, which lasted less than half an hour. Although Ruth had to confront the audience literally face to face and was

unable to move freely across space as she did during most performances, she managed to accompany the dramatic delivery of the lyrics with intense corporeal movement. Alistair quickly took his mask off right after the first song, apparently due to the excessive heat. I was careful to avoid Sophie's swinging bass guitar, because despite the lack of space she had not compromised her performance and she was moving her instrument back and forth while dancing erratically. However, Ruth, the vocalist, was less lucky.

Once the set was finished, everyone instantly left the room craving for fresh air. I saw Ruth in the bathroom holding her forehead, while Sophie was there too. Ruth had a cut on her forehead and there was blood oozing from the wound. I asked her if that was 'for real' because her face was covered in fake blood, which at this moment was difficult to distinguish from real blood. She replied affirmatively and looked rather worried. After a while both decided to leave and I did not see Ruth or Sophie for the rest of night. Back inside, Alistair and Anna asked to see the pictures I had taken during their performance. Anna told us that she had some issues with her guitar sound due to the lack of an installed sound system but she had enjoyed the gig nonetheless. Alistair asked me whether I could send him the photographs, and I agreed to do that the following day.

4.5 Extreme to a Certain Point

Further to the ironic use of stage names (Chapter 3), my informants employed irony in their visual manipulation of particular stereotypes. Satanic iconography was a case in point, which also appeared on *Divorce* releases (Figure 4.4). The sense of mockery underscoring the direct citation of diabolical references is consonant with the observation that ironists deploy the literal meaning of an utterance in order to subvert it and convey a comic or ridiculing attitude (Fernandez & Huber 2001: 3). Sensationalism aside, demonic iconography *did* manage to emulate the 'sensualism' with which Satanic cults and Satanism in general have been associated, without inducing an 'epidemic' of moral panic (see La Fontaine 1998).

Figure 4.4: Divorce 10” vinyl label.

The playful provocation evident in the description of the party, the decoration and the costumes deliberately flirted with established notions of Satan as ‘a potent symbol of man’s (sic) lustful nature’ (Kahn-Harris 2007: 40) and humans’ bestial or animalistic essence (Lewis 2009: 44; Faxneld & Petersen 2012: 6). By replacing the inverted cross as *the* symbol of human potential in contemporary Satanism, the pentagram represents the primacy of matter over (Christian) spirit (Cordero 2009: para. 4; Petersen 2009: 9). After all, the toga alluded to another popular stereotype whereby the Roman Empire had degenerated into a swirl of sexual orgies, while the garment’s embodiment of the *mores* of Roman citizenship was indeed replaced by its signification of moral decline (Vout 1996: 217). Evacuated from its evil, sexual and unethical resonances, the carnality invoked by the specific themes related to a broader facet of the band’s music and specifically its sensuous and visceral qualities, that is, its *geno-song* characteristics (Barthes 1977; see Conclusion). These affective intensities conditioned a kaleidoscopic sensory stimulation that impinged on the body via multiple channels and did not confine

music within a uni-sensorial auditory corporeality (Howes 2003: 47), but engaged tactile and visual registers.

Alistair was proud of the first 10'' record because he considered it a well-made and carefully crafted artefact. Anna, who had the necessary skills for the job had produced the artwork. It was the creation of *Divorce* designs such as this or for *Divorce* t-shirts that had revived her interest in painting. The record was also pressed on bright red vinyl. Thus, the cover and the actual record were dominated by red, a colour invariably associated with happiness, love, passion and sexual readiness as well as danger, while its titillating, arousing qualities are said to produce an outward and expansive bodily behaviour (Elliot & Maier 2007). Alistair recounted how good he had felt when he walked into Monorail and saw the record placed in a privileged position high on the shop's wall, where new releases were usually exhibited. His desire was for *Divorce* to produce physical copies of their music and he thought that 'material counts'. Vinyl records in particular could be seen as the sensuous epitome of music formats due to their size, smell and fragility, as well as the fact that one could actually 'see' the music etched on vinyl (Fonarow 2006: 47-48). Crucially, vinyl carried analogue sound as opposed to digital formats.

The band had chosen Green Door to record their album because of the analogue equipment in place that was preferred by *Divorce*, something that also explained why they wanted to re-record the songs that were initially captured on digital equipment. The analogue equipment at Green Door had no practical advantages over digital. It was the distinctive 'warm' sound which only recording on magnetic tape could produce, as Alistair put it, which appealed to *Divorce*. Thus, analogue sound was preferred on the basis of its *sensation* rather than its practicality. Despite being a common claim, the association of analogue sound with heat is important. As Classen (1993: 126) has argued, thermal symbolism pervades cultural life and ideas, which are not only articulated in thermal terms but are felt and expressed *through the body.* The warmth of

sound ‘touches’, enters and envelops the body completely, endowing it with affective potential.

Related to this was the view that live performance could provide a model *for* recording. Thus, for Anna, the ideal was to try and record ‘as live as possible’ rather than have each member play their parts separately. This ran the risk of making mistakes, but this was something for which the resulting dynamic could compensate. Therefore, some mistakes in playing were acceptable and could be outweighed by an ‘unmediated’ delivery that could reach the ears of the listener and affectively engage him in the performance (see also Hirschkind 2006: 51-52). Cohen notes a similar preference in the approach of her case studies to recording and she explains that they sought to capture the ‘raw’ intensity of live performance, something that was almost impossible due to the different volume and lack of visual references of the recorded sound (1991: 179). The loudness of sound, the effects and adjustments that the band employed to fit their sets and the theatricality of performance created an environment conducive to the multi-sensuous enactment of the compositions.

Divorce’s live sets were often put together so that the band would not have to stop playing in between songs. This was achieved by elongating songs or producing guitar feedback – a self-referential resonance, the complex immediacy of which could best be described as sonic ‘intensity’ or affect (see Massumi 2002: 14). The preservation of a constant affective sonic stream would give Alistair and Sophie the opportunity to start the next song but it also characterized the band’s performances as a whole. *Divorce* believed that they sounded best when they performed live. This ‘live’ sound was determined by the specificity of its aural qualities, the kinds of equipment the band used, the sound engineer present, as well as the venue in question and its available sound installation.

Alistair normally kept his own drum kit at home and was trying to upgrade it by purchasing expensive plates and other paraphernalia. *Divorce* paid attention to the

complexity of rhythm and to the rhythmic sections of the songs in general, which often provided the foundations for the band's compositions. According to Alistair this separated *Divorce* from other noise music acts, who focused less on rhythm and more to the production of loud and repeated soundscapes. Finnegan notes that the distinctive combination of emotive and kinetic elements of music are exemplified by rhythm (1989: 340), while drumming has been an integral element of ritual (Needham 1967; Turner 1968). Indeed, percussion, dance and ritual are considered interdependent, to such an extent that certain West African cultures, for example, use one word to describe all three (Fonarow 2006: 169). However, for *Divorce*, the prominence of rhythm in the song-writing process was not translated into its sonic privileging. Guitar and bass sound, as well as vocals, were equally important as Anna explained:

> We like everything to be completely focused and dry, we always have complete level and everything's coming through pedals [guitar and bass sound]. Whenever we have distortion on the amps it's all through pedals and never any reverb or anything on the vocals, everything's just dry basically. I think the less effects you actually put on things the harsher they sound.

A few months after the band had started rehearsing and writing songs Anna bought her own guitar amplifier, which she would always carry at gigs locally and on tour. She preferred the specific sound that her amplifier produced, and which other brands could not because they sounded 'bassy' and 'muffly', whereas Anna wanted her guitar to sound 'trebly'. In order to achieve this high-pitched, screeching sound Anna would adjust the amp's settings to the high-end maximum. The treble on her pedals also had to be set accordingly. Anna was using three pedals, a Big Muff, a Fuzz and an Octavedrone (Figure 4.5).

The Octavedrone was 'mental sounding', and Anna would combine it with the Fuzz. That would produce the desirable 'ridiculously loud and distorted' sound. The Fuzz pedal was her main one and would stay continuously on while playing. The Big Muff, a pedal which Sophie also owned and used, would enrich the guitar and bass sounds with more 'metal', while the Octavedrone did what its name implied: it would reproduce

whatever note Anna hit but also expand it to an octave above and an octave below. In essence, then, it sounded as if Anna played three notes with one strum. The added 'fuzzy' effect would culminate in a 'weird' sound.

Figure 4.5: Anna's pedals on stage at Sneaky Pete's, Edinburgh.

In terms of the range of frequencies, Anna, Lucy and Sophie split the frequency bands between them, with the former playing hi-end parts, Lucy's guitar sound moving within the mid-range and Sophie occupying the low-end with her bass. Splitting the entire frequency range between the three of them resulted in the production of a full riff. As Alistair had once remarked: 'If you want to make loud music you need to make it sound *big*'.

The desired characteristics of the band's sound also ordered and classified performance spaces as well as articulating the ways in which band members related to sound engineers and sound equipment. Anna, like the rest of the band, carried her equipment

to the venue where *Divorce* would perform. However, the space's acoustics, its sound engineer and the equipment at hand largely dictated the final output. Ruth believed that Nice'n'Sleazy was a 'weird' venue in terms of the quality of sound, which worked for some bands but not for others. Similarly, the band valued specific local venues with regards to their capacity of producing a specific sound, but also on the basis of the sound engineers that were employed in each. Anna believed that by using their own equipment the band could minimize the risk of altering their sound while playing live, even in the absence of a high-quality installed PA. By contrast, using random amplifiers could have a direct, negative effect.

Along the same lines, the lack of a skilled or cooperative sound engineer could also pose serious challenges. Whereas sound personnel at the 13th Note and the Captain's Rest were considered experienced in working with noisy bands such as *Divorce*, in other venues problems arose when sound engineers attempted to impose their views or could not understand the band's preferred sound. The problem was rather acute during *Divorce* tours when the band had to deal with technical staff that were unfamiliar with the band's music. A common source of debate was Anna's 'trebly' sound. Several times she was addressed with the question of whether she wanted her guitar to be *that* trebly. Anna summarized the characteristics of the ideal sound engineer as follows:

> I think a good sound guy should be able to adapt to whatever the band play in front of them, no matter what their taste in music is. I think the whole point of that is to be quite neutral and just make that band sound the best that they can, rather than telling them how to change their sound.

Sometimes sound engineers also criticized the loudness of her guitar and would subsequently turn the volume down. Anna would lose all the effects and intricate details present in her playing. For sure, sound levels were sometimes less negotiable due to each venue's specific regulations. But when this was the outcome of the sound engineer's insistence rather than a legal obligation, Anna would ask him or her to disconnect the amplifier from the PA (the volume controls of which were at the

engineer's disposal) so that her sound remained unaffected. The wattage of her amp would suffice to compensate for the lack of amplification via the central sound system.

The way in which aurality determined the band's relation to space, materials, and other individuals, such as sound engineers, resonates with Classen's remark that the senses provide the means by which we order the world around us. Moreover, Classen points out that 'sensory relations are social relations' but at the same time *ethical* relations (1993: 136-137). For example, the critical judgements made by sound engineers on Anna's guitar sound were ethical in character. As Frith points out, 'good' or 'bad' music are aesthetic preferences that are linked to ethical judgements (1996b: 72).

Crucially, the multi-sensory qualities of music-making, which involved the warmth and odour of analogue sound and vinyl, the spectacular movement of bodies onstage and the coloured intensity of the visual imagery employed for releases, point to the fact that we should consider the sensory interplay rather than the dominant sensory medium or the hierarchy of the senses in each context (Classen 1993: 135-136). *Divorce* members described their sound as big, warm, dry, harsh, fuzzy, distorted and focused. This implied a sensuality that went beyond the sonorous characteristics of music and towards an understanding of the plural modes of affect that undergird musical creativity and sonic presences, as well as to the expansion of perceptual and expressive regimes that music affords. As Anna summed it up, *Divorce*'s music was 'a sensory overload, maybe *extreme* to a certain point'.

4.6 The Vocalist's Three Bodies

The practico-material circumstances of music-making cannot be neatly separated from ethical conduct. Ethics do not refer to meaning or signification but are embedded in the specific technologies or techniques, that is, the *work* that individuals do, including the bodily capacities that they bring upon themselves through training (Mahmood 2005: 27, 29). In this section, I explore ethical practices in relation to music-making by focusing

upon the body as a *musical instrument* (Seeger 1987: 78-81). Ruth's instrument was her voice, a musical capacity inextricably linked with her body, which emerged as a 'technical object' as well as a 'means' (Mauss 1973 [1935]: 75). The affective propensities with which her body was endowed spurred ethical potentialities that were subsequently 'qualified' through specific techniques.

During rehearsals, while Alistair, Sophie, Lucy and Anna played their instruments, Ruth would hold a pen and a pad and write lyrics. By the time *Divorce* had finished the song Ruth had also finalized the lyrics:

> I was pretty much left to my own devices while everyone was doing the song, and I would sit next to everyone while they were doing it and just think about lyrics, write lyrics down, think about where lyrics might go, and sometimes I would write lyrics and then figure out how to place them in the song...Nobody wrote lyrics but me.

It is interesting that, while for the first three songs that were composed in Ruth's absence it took her some time to add lyrics, for the subsequent ones Ruth was able to write all the lyrics on the spot. Ruth wrote 'rhythmically' and so it was easier for her writing to follow the actual tempo of the music and capture the dynamics of bodily movement in the studio. Her body, therefore, was a rhythmic *tool* (Lefebvre 2004). Having an interest in literature and poetry also helped Ruth with her writing, as did a pocket thesaurus that she always carried with her in *Divorce* rehearsals.

Although individual members could come up with a certain musical part that formed the basis for a song, *Divorce* compositions never sprung out of Ruth's lyrics or song titles, and the band collectively decided upon the latter. Ruth's writing reflects Foucault's remark about the relationship between writing and the 'care of the self' (1997: 207-222, 232-234). Ruth was not writing *about* herself, but, as she had mentioned, lyrics were a means to learn and perfect her writing style. The rhythmic, almost metronomic mode of her writing regulated this process requiring bodily instrumentality and the channeling of affect into translatable cognitive territories. According to Lefebvre the palpable qualities

of musical rhythm and its relation to the body, time and work, to 'real life', integrates and facilitates the ethical function of rhythms (Lefebvre 2004: 66).

Ruth's preparation for *Divorce* performances involved the brief warming-up of her voice and also testing the microphone by checking that vocals blended well with the band's instrumental sound. I had observed that just before their sets, Ruth would sit alone for a few minutes avoiding communication. An otherwise sociable and outgoing person, she nevertheless opted for a short period of isolation before the gig, during which she would 'psych herself up' for the performance by reading through the playlist and the lyrics. She told me that: 'I would probably have a beer or two to take of the edge of the nerves a little bit, and then I would just be quiet...because I get so nervous'. This is consonant with Cohen's remark (1991: 97-98) about different degrees of drunkenness which Liverpool bands sought to achieve before going on stage. Getting into a state of emotional readiness to confront the audience was important, but isolation and alcohol consumption also represented processes of bodily, that is, ethical adaptation to the requirements of the performance. With regards to her actual performance, Ruth explained that:

> The crawling happened because I was so nervous at our first show that I couldn't deal with everyone looking at me, so I crawled up on the floor in their feet so that not as many people would be able to look at me. The evolution of me going from crawling to standing on stage and dancing a bit is an evolution of my performance confidence-building. This is funny because most people think that it would be easier for me to stand on stage and sing and harder to get out in the audience and roll about. But it was so much easier to do that because not everybody is watching me the whole time.

But there was more than this. Despite Ruth's perception of her performances as honest and authentic, over time she started feeling that her seemingly unregulated movements – in essence a conscious effort to *discipline* uncontrolled intensities – were not regarded by the audience as affective but as an '*affectation* of some sort', a set of mannerisms she was expected to deliver. Consequently, Ruth attempted to diversify and enrich her repertoire, which had the opposite effect of her becoming more restrained during

performances. Another reason for this shift, according to Ruth, was that occasionally people in the audience perceived her performance as sexually charged or even an invitation to interact with her outside the context of performances. During performances, verbal communication with the audience could also potentially impose a break in Ruth's physical and mental coordination because each song:

> [W]as an emotional follow-up, so between songs I was just ready for the next one...It was so intense that I wasn't really ready to talk to anyone because I was just in the zone of whatever...I just had to keep doing that, I had to keep going until the end of the set.

Ruth's only piece of equipment was a microphone. However, shouting and screaming were not only physically demanding, but Ruth also felt that her vocal delivery was hurting her throat and her ability to sing properly. Especially during the tours, Ruth avoided staying up until late drinking, and she would only allow herself one cigarette per day. Although she acknowledged the fact that the rest of the band would prefer to socialize with her after the gig, she had also realized early on that the level of physical punishment that consecutive performances inflicted upon her body meant that she had to compensate by resting after the gigs. Furthermore, singing with a sore throat could dramatically affect and compromise her subsequent performances. There was a time when the band played three gigs in three days, all in Glasgow. Halfway through the second show Ruth suddenly realized that:

> There were certain notes I couldn't hit anymore; when I tried to hit them my voice wouldn't make a sound at all, and I could do everything else except for these set notes that my voice had just decided that I'm not allowed...And then I had to go a bit lower and the sound would come back in. After that I realized that I'd have to maybe look after my throat a bit more.

The raspy and guttural nature of Ruth's singing was the main reason for the increasing deterioration of her voice, and she soon started looking for ways of diminishing the damage without affecting her performances. One of her friends, who also engaged in equally intense singing styles, had informed her about a classically-trained female

performer in New York called Melissa Cross that had developed a particular set of warm-up exercises for people who practiced shouting and screaming.[107]

These exercises were called 'the zen of screaming' and were based upon the idea that through the mobilization of specific parts of the body, the sound could be produced with support by the diaphragm, thus releasing the tension that tended to concentrate on the throat. 'Pushing' the sound with her diaphragm resulted in Ruth's abdomen being in pain after the performance but not her throat. Ruth would engage in the exercises at any point before the performance and, as long as she did not sleep in between, her voice stayed at the same 'position' ready for singing. Ruth practiced the zen of screaming regularly, but after a while she would only do it occasionally, especially when her throat was feeling sore.

Over time Ruth developed a strong diaphragm but also a more elaborate vocal repertoire. Apart from the benefits of the warm-up exercises, Ruth's corporeal adaptation to the demands of her role in the band became a process of assessing, discovering and cultivating her singing abilities. Whereas at first she was not particularly aware of her voice's limitations, later on Ruth became conversant with different kinds of melodies and ways of producing them, by adding twists and adjusting her shouting to the circumstances relevant to each occasion. Initially, she would just shout as loud as possible in a fairly natural way, but increased confidence and the incorporation of nuanced and diverse vocal techniques meant that what sounded to untrained ears like 'growling' was in fact singing: the outcome of hard work and practice that adhered to specific criteria.

For Ruth, her vocals were 'a weirdly internal experience' and she had always been 'unsure about how to deal with this kind of tension'. I take 'internal' to signify an embodied affective capacity rather than a disembedded cognitive process. This is because it was internal *organs* that were targeted and had to be conditioned by the vocal

[107] See http://www.melissacross.com/home.php? [Accessed 15 August 2012].

exercises. It follows that the subliminal, autonomic processes with which Ruth's body, movement and voice were imbued had to be mastered, reorganized and 'rationalized' through visceral technologies that impinged upon her affective potential by 'qualifying' it. These techniques were partially predicated upon 'sacrifices' that Ruth had to make rather than a form of austerity akin to Christian asceticism (Weber 1930), or extreme forms of bodily and material renunciation (e.g. Laidlaw 1995, 2005). In this sense it was closer to classical forms of asceticism, in the form of 'an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being' (Foucault 1997: 282).

It also resembled the occupational ethic of sacrifice described by Wacquant (1998) whereby an instrumentalist conception of the body amongst pugilists was complemented by intense corporeal care to sustain its efficacy. These interrelated ideas and practices were not aimed to suppress but to hone and consolidate the instrumental, the 'aesthetic' and the sacrificial/ethical bodies into a harmonious and virtuous conduct according to the principles of the craft. Similarly, the process of training and austerity that Ruth had to undergo to preserve and develop her vocal abilities was linked not to acts of self-renunciation, but to a bodily apprenticeship which involved the care of the body in accord with an ethic attuned to the needs of her singing praxis. This forged a specific *êthos*, that is 'a way of being and of behaviour' (Foucault 1997: 286; see also Chapter 2).

Ruth of course cared about her appearance and audience reception, therefore 'aesthetic' concerns were indeed important. But rather than 'beautifying' the ethical, 'aestheticism' is better understood as a transformational potential (Foucault 1997: 130) and also as a particular *aesthesis* (or *aisthesis*), that is, the affective/sensuous registers engaged in her practice as a *felt* experience (Mazzarella 2009: 293; Wacquant 1998: 329). As Atkinson notes in his 'operatic' ethnography, performers strive towards a bodily perfection, but one which – contrary to Wacquant's pugilists – is irrelevant to both general fitness and 'good looks' (2006: 56). This is not to deny that vocal performances are intensely

physical experiences. ‘The lives of the performer and the athlete’, Atkinson continues, ‘are equally devoted to protracted periods of training and rehearsal that are preparations for less frequent and periodic bursts of intense activity’ (2006: 56).

It follows that a singing body is a *docile* body, but not in the sense of authoritarian control (e.g. Foucault 1977). The submission to certain bodily conventions, rules and positions should neither be perceived as subordination nor as passivity, but as an exercise of self-determination through *inhabiting* norms (Mahmood 2005). Ruth’s practice was not predicated upon resisting or rejecting the doctrines pertinent to her singing style, but upon her conscious desire to excel, cultivate and achieve a particular mode of bodily (ethical) capacity.

Thus, the forms of asceticism related to this mode of self-fashioning exemplified the paradox of Foucault’s ‘subjectivation’: it is through the same conditions of restriction and subordination that individuals become aware of their agentival capacities and work on themselves in order to realize their subjective potentialities. ‘Docility’, therefore should not be conflated with the abandonment of agency but with one’s ability to *actively* submit oneself to a training regime in order to gain the desired skills or knowledge. Mahmood suggests that we should go beyond the structure/agency dualism, exactly because agentival action does not necessarily involve ‘resistance’, but it further consists of active and diverse appropriations, expressions and performances of normativity (ibid.: 22; see also Chapter 6).

Ruth was preoccupied with developing her vocal abilities and renewing her performance repertoire. This ethical project involved a certain number of techniques at the level of the visceral and the interoceptive, but the interconnectedness of voice and bodily movement also conditioned the proprioceptive. Therefore, Ruth’s *aesthesis* of performance engaged an array of sensory-motor sites and also engendered a particular muscle-sense and bodily motion that permeated her movement. For Potter, *kinaesthesia* offers a sense of biological control and manipulation but also register and manage

bodily change and emotional expression (2008: 451-452). As I have argued above, Ruth's evolving sense of movement reflected the regulation of affect, a shift in bodily discipline as well as an emotional strategy.

But this involved the rest of the band too. The gradual sharpening of her stage skills meant that Ruth's seemingly uncontrolled intensity of movement was counteracted by a particular stage orientation and navigation through experience that resulted in mutual bodily attunement and harmonious onstage motion. Ruth's training required a massive effort, a 'docile' body but also care about her physical well-being. Technologies of the self are considered as training techniques within a broader principle: 'Take care of your self' [*soucie-toi de toi-même*] (Foucault 1997: 285).

Caring for oneself, though, should not be conflated with an egoistic form of self-love as opposed to altruistic sacrifice, but as a process that essentially expresses care for others (ibid.: 227, 287-289; see also Chapter 5). The fact that I have focused on Ruth due to the innate corporeality of singing by no means undermines the role of the body in its relation to musical instruments. After all, corporeal instrumentality and the dynamics of movement are acute characteristics of instrument playing (e.g. Baily 1977; Dawe 2005). For Baily, '[a] musical instrument transduces patterns of body movement into patterns of sound' (1977: 275). Dawe argues that instruments externalize, extend and transform human bodies and minds in that they affect:

> [S]tates of mind as much as joints, tendons and synapses, ergonomics and social interaction – the joy of playing musical instruments is a joy that comes from exhilaration felt at the physical, emotional and social levels. The "feel" of the fret board of a guitar, for example, not only reflects attuning or attuned motor-spatial co-ordination skills when one is playing, it reflects a dexterity that is both manual and sensual, cathartic and athletic (2005: 60).

The fact that *Divorce* members were self-taught musicians does not preclude the controlled, regulated body that is required for learning an instrument or enacting music. Such a view would conceal the corporeal investment that goes into the process of music-making outside of institutions. After all, technical competence does not suggest

an exclusive or ideal way of corporeal engagement with musical instruments: learning involves participation that requires the presence of the body beyond technical proficiency (Qureshi 2000: 808). Lack of formal tuition influenced the band's sound. Alistair, for example, regarded it to enable him to avoid the conventions of formal playing. Consequently, he claimed that his *mind* accessed rhythmic combinations and ideas that were unconventional. These valorized musical idiosyncrasies do not contradict Green's assertions about music education:

> Overall, the musicians shunned the notion of discipline in so far as it was associated with something unpleasant, but recognized it in so far as it related to the systematic ways in which they approached learning. The level of systematization seems to have become increasingly apparent to the musicians as time went by (2001: 103).

Although at the start Alistair did not consider himself a good drummer, through *bodily* practice he had become more efficient. The other members of *Divorce* also believed that playing in the band had improved their instrumental skills. Playing and learning to play an instrument imposed upon their respective bodies specific positions, postures, movements and bodily training through which musical capacities lodged themselves into the flesh. As such, these corporeal practices were also ethical, insofar as they contributed to the constitution of embodied subjects. In music practice, therefore, the body emerged as an instrument of ethical becoming (see also Hirschkind 2006: 79).

But considering that the musician's body is organized around or surrounded by his or her instrument, would it be an omission not to perceive musical instruments themselves, as well as Ruth's microphone, pen and notepad, as 'ethical materials' of a kind (see Mahmood 2005: 82)? This point is reinforced by the predominance of tactile sensations that instrument playing invokes, among their equally compelling visual and olfactory elements, and the logic of 'whatever you touch, touches you too' (Hsu 2000: 252). In a way then, could we say that instruments also 'perform' musicians (Bates 2012), condition their bodies and endow them with ethical proclivities and aptitudes ? I pursue this matter further in Chapter 6.

4.7 The Ethics of Etiquette

For Ruth singing was an 'internal' experience. However, writing lyrics and then passionately shouting them during performances was a form of an 'extra-personal experience' (Seremetakis 1994: 6). As I mentioned above, for the band as a whole an important aspect of the song-writing process was the evaluation of their compositions in performance during which their music could be scrutinized. In rehearsals, individual members focused upon playing their own parts to produce the building blocks of the songs. The gig, on the other hand, presented a dynamic in which each composition could be considered as a whole, how it sounded in space and was disseminated to the audience, and the ways in which the band experienced its enactment. As Anna put it: 'There're so many songs that we've written, played live and hated or torn apart'.

Music was one of the means by which *Divorce* and the audience were related. In several instances the band would introduce themselves or address the audience verbally. Ruth consistently felt shy and unable to do this. For example, at the Newcastle gig during their 2010 tour Ruth passed the microphone to Alistair who briefly introduced the band, while at the Leeds gig Lucy apologized to the audience for the band's delay in getting on stage. Ruth recounted an incident, when she had been prompted by a member of the band to ask the sound engineer for certain adjustments. After shouting and screaming in the last song, she switched to her normal, delicate voice in order to talk to the engineer. She thought that it was exactly the discrepancy between the two different tones that rendered it funny, but this also made her appear as a totally different person.

This relationship was reciprocal. Apart from applauding and cheering, the audience frequently and loudly commented upon the performance and, more often than not, they would ask for an encore. In Newcastle and Manchester the band did not perform additional songs despite the audience's sustained applause, which can be explained by the fact that *Divorce* were supporting *Comanechi*, and generally it was considered inappropriate for a support band to do an encore. Another way in which the audience

expressed their appreciation was through erratic dancing, pushing and other seemingly spasmodic and risky bodily maneuvers often known as 'moshing', 'slamdancing', 'stagediving' and 'crowdsurfing' (Fonarow 2006: 82-91; Tsitsos 1999). Moshing was quite common at *Divorce* gigs. Tsitsos defines it as a form of dance 'in which participants (mostly men) violently hurl their bodies at one another in a dance area called a "pit"' (1999: 397).[108] The band's music was conducive to such practice and it was something they expected: 'A rowdy show is a rowdy show and I totally understand that' was Lucy's view, but she added that:

> There's difference between dancing and maybe even shoving each other around a bit...[But] even if you're drunk, if you know that there are people standing at the front of the stage with pints or something, you don't push them on top of people's gear, their equipment, their guitars.

Before going on tour with *Comanechi* Lucy made a pedal board upon which she mounted all her effects pedals so that she could replug everything quickly in case somebody accidentally kicked them. In Newcastle, after seeing that moshing had evolved in a rather disorderly situation and that there was a risk of injury or damage, she took the microphone and pleaded the audience to calm down and respect the band and their equipment. After Lucy had urged the audience for a calmer response the situation still looked out of control.

For example, I was unwillingly pushed around, had beer accidentally poured on me, got squeezed, stepped on and other delights. Somebody had also trampled over and unplugged the microphone's cable that Ruth was able to regain after pushing away some people. Then, all of a sudden, Lucy jumped into the audience with her back facing them, she bent her legs and back and started walking backwards whilst playing the guitar. In doing so, she managed to drive the audience towards the back and nobody complained or reacted against this unexpected move. The performance went on as if nothing extraordinary had happened.

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[108] Moshing emerged as a variation of slamdancing, which was a modification of the early punk 'pogo' dance (Tsitsos 1999: 405).

Bodily discipline was thus required for the purposes of music-making and performance, but it also underpinned the band's relationship with the audience. The body's affective attachments and responses to its musical surroundings were exemplified by the way in which Ruth asserted herself during performance, as well as by the overall physicality of the band's correspondence with the audience. Atkinson states that a performance is equally 'physical' for audience members in the sense that 'to see and hear a performer "in the flesh" is to share in the physicality of the enactment' (2006: 56). The visceral 'exchange' signified by Lucy's gesture not only aimed to protect the band but also highlighted and delineated physical *boundaries* for the event as a whole. Consider Anna's words, for example:

> I like moshing, there's nothing wrong with jumping about and friendly pushing, as long as you understand you don't want to hurt somebody else. Somebody might genuinely be enjoying the music, but you still have to respect other people's boundaries, especially when, say, somebody that's small has to stand really far back and they don't want to go at the front because there's people pushing about.

To the eyes and bodies of the uninitiated – such as myself – moshing felt 'out of control'. However, as Tsitsos notes, moshing expresses a form of rebellion through dancing that reflects the desire 'for ordered control' (1999: 400). Therefore, *etiquette* was important (see also Fonarow 2006: 91). Respecting boundaries and not hurting others were inherent values of the practice, though sometimes the violent clash of bodies made it difficult to avoid minor injuries. This form of etiquette was apparent when fallen dancers would be immediately aided by other moshers to stand up (Tsitsos 1999: 406). Could we define moshing as a form of etiquette, that is, a set of manners or constraints imposed to individuals with regards to what is considered to be a proper conduct? In her examination of nineteenth-century American etiquette manuals, Yeung argues that:

> By contrast to the notion of etiquette as an "artificial" external form or merely a set of gate-keeping rituals...manners were inextricably linked to morality and standards of authenticity and sincerity...I suggest that at the heart of a seemingly external etiquette lies, quite simply, ethics – that is, the imperative to align principle with

> habitual practice in bringing about, paradoxically, one's own virtue and sincerity through disciplined effort (2010: 236, 243).

Although Yeung does not mention Geertz, her conviction echoes the latter's description of etiquette in Java (1960: 227-260; cf. Lindquist 2004; Wikan 1990). Geertz describes how among the *prijajis* or urban elites a combination of beliefs reflected in a behavioural continuum ranging from refined and exquisite to rough and impolite, as well as a distinction between 'inner life' and comportment, brings about the circumstances of a regulated behaviour as the means to refine an individual's emotional life. This is mediated by *rasa* or 'etiquette-feeling', which is considered a form of 'capital' that each individual possesses. The role of *rasa* is to make others feel peaceful through the deployment of politeness, which incites a similar response that subsequently feeds back to the individual's inner cosmos, thus increasing his *rasa* capital.

Etiquette builds a 'wall' and protects one's true emotions, but paradoxically this wall is built mainly by the effort of trying to make *others* feel at ease. On the one hand *prijajis* strive to cultivate and discipline 'inner' emotional virtues. On the other hand, etiquette is a form of training that helps them to outwardly protect and defend these virtues. However, as an emotionally tranquilizing property, behaviour and comportment are inextricably linked with the inner life of individuals, while the dual sense attached to *rasa* or 'etiquette-feeling' suggests an alignment, a resonance and a sequence in the ordering of outer life and inner state.

As such, etiquette 'is the transfer to the level of interpersonal behavior of the calm and muted feeling tone of the inner life' but also 'an effort after order as it moves from the surface of human experience toward its depths, from the outer aspect of life toward the inner' (Geertz 1960: 238, 242; see also Mahmood 2005). The ordering of etiquette allows one to turn inward and engage in emotional refinement, but these two processes are not kept separate and so subjective emotional cultivation *depends* upon the formal control of outward behaviour and vice versa.

But the historical transition from sincerity to authenticity (Trilling 1971), in other words from a preoccupation with *appearance* to one with *essence,* suggests that etiquette as a carefully calculated demeanour obscures the transparent relationship between what one 'does' and what one 'means', and is thus a barrier to authenticity (Yeung 2010: 241). With this in mind, how might we account for the fact that the external rules of conduct that constrain and regulate behaviour might actually be both ethical and authentic (see also Conclusion)? After all, adhering to strict rules can be perceived as unethical, insofar as ethics involves the conscious practice of one's freedom.

According to Yeung, and following Geertz's account, we could perceive etiquette as the means by which individuals *acquire* the desired virtues and characteristics incorporated in manners that will *become* 'natural' and 'authentic' through embodied practice, rather than define it as a merely deceptive performance of a normative order.

As evidenced by Hirschkind (2006) and Mahmood (2005), mastering prescriptions through bodily training holds 'the promise of virtuous authenticity and authentic virtue' (Yeung 2010: 244). Consequently, moshing etiquette represents a *physical* course to authenticity and an embodied, ethical conduct geared towards inducing particular sensibilities and dispositions. However, if we accept Tsitsos's remark about the rebellious underpinnings of the dance we then are presented with another paradox, namely that following etiquette is also a confirmation of social order (ibid.: 246).

This order, nonetheless, is not singular. Moshing as a form of 'non-manners' can best be described as, and captured by, the notion of 'resistant comportment' (Hamann 2007). The rejection of 'proper' etiquette and the dominant social order (that considers clashing bodies and 'violent' behaviour aesthetically appalling and at best as downright rudeness), involves the simultaneous propagation and enactment of another order: an 'anti-structure' (Turner 1969). This can be found in the comportment of moshers and articulates, regulates and determines behaviour in the context of similar events.

Notably, the rejection of the dominant social order that defines what etiquette is raises the question of how to determine appropriate behaviour *tout court*. The answer lies in the recognition that the appropriateness of etiquette as socially accepted behaviour is immanent to ongoing practice and emerges through the acting-out of the embodied propensities it helps to instigate. As Yeung argues, practicing rules of etiquette involves a good deal of unpredictability, improvisation and judgement. In principle, etiquette as a strict and teleological adherence to a set of guidelines is *anethical* and inauthentic. But to the extent that it stems from continuous bodily-regulated behaviour and practice and engenders ethical sensibilities, etiquette presents an end in itself. This is because then one indeed *means what one does* rather than doing what he or she means (Yeung 2010: 245). Considering the above, moshing was a 'sincere' form of dance, a form of authentication through deportment and an ethical embodied practice.

Crucially, etiquette implies a form of interaction, mutual constitution and embodiment. In her account of the psychosomatics of the area closer to the stage (the 'pit'), Fonarow examines 'the body as the means to perception' and bodily movement as 'the conduit to musical appreciation' (2006: 104). The hyper-density and intensity of physical intimacy and interaction facilitate a sense of unity, community or *communitas* (Turner 1969) among audience members, but between performers and audience too. As Keil has shown, the expression of common problems through elaborate oral, aural, kinetic and visual symbolisms promotes a catharsis, a sensuous resolution that fosters solidarity (1966: 137).

Turner's *communitas* is an expression of our common human bond and nurtures a feeling of inclusiveness. The 'anti-structure' that it accomplishes is better conceived as shared 'flow' but one which has limitations, while these boundaries spring from within the flow itself rather than imposed from without (Turner 1988: 133). In this light, etiquette seems to play an important role in even the most shifting, 'liminal', betwixt-and-between circumstances. *Communitas*, however, just like etiquette, is conditional and does not guarantee that everyone present will enter its realm. Musical performance

thus represents a *tendency*, a shared and mutually sensed affect and a capacity to enter a reciprocal ethical becoming. DeChaine calls it a 'project': '[A]n opportunity for reflection; a potential for change; a becoming; an instructive, collaborative energy that we breathe (or scream) into each other's ear. In the space of musical experience, we foment transformation' (2002: 95).

4.8 Noise Interference

During the 2010 tour, and after the Manchester gig had come to an end, Ruth and Lucy each announced that they were leaving the band. Their exact reasons were unknown to me at the time and had not been made public. Later on, however, I had the opportunity to talk with both Ruth and Lucy about their departures.[109] Ruth's energy depletion and time constraints stemming from her studies had resulted in a tension that was amplified during the physically demanding tours, which involved successive intense performances and relative lack of sleep. One repercussion of this was her gradual lack of active *bodily* engagement with the music. 'After a while', Ruth told me, 'I felt like I was going through the motions'. But she also added: 'It's physical, emotional, and mental investment to be in a band that's doing that much'.

Lucy on the other hand believed that the 'camaraderie' had gradually dissolved, and thus the reason for her participation in the band ceased to exist. According to Lucy this had deprived *Divorce* from the pleasure of making music *together*. She had seen that last tour as an opportunity to try and remedy these problems. However, the situation had not improved and this was a signifier to Lucy that the band was falling apart and that her time in it had run out. For Lucy, 'people that are playing music in bands are just people, they're human beings, and sometimes it's really easy to forget that about each other'. She explained that the shifting dynamic of the band had *affected* her ability to function and make music.

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[109] *Divorce* have not disbanded. A few months later they recruited a new vocalist, Jan, an American GSA student. Anna remained the only guitarist in the band.

Band dynamics have been scrutinized in various ethnographic accounts (e.g. Cohen 1991; Bennett 1980). However, the systematic and almost mechanical connotations of the bands' 'functioning' tend to valorize band dynamics as a process of social exchange and interaction based upon personal aspirations, social conventions or economic constraints. However, music's importance is neither grounded in cognitive processes nor in its social function. Music is equally, if not mainly, compelling due to its physicality.

The bodily responses and affective qualities associated with the band's music had a profound effect on members of *Divorce* as well as audiences: the multi-sensory stimuli elicited by onstage physical movement, the visual imagery that accompanied their releases, tour posters and, sometimes, performances, the tactile and kinetic elements of instrument playing and dancing, 'heat', as well as the visceral gravity of the sound, were all major affective impingements on the band's continuous engagement in music-making. In short, the band loved playing music, making and manipulating sounds, which were sources of profound pleasure or 'fun' (Cohen 1991: 190). This 'fun' aspect celebrated bodily expressiveness and sensuality rather than a form of detached reflection on musical 'meaning' (see also Verkaaik 2004).

The meaning *felt* by *Divorce*'s music did not reside in music *per se*, that is in pure sound. Music does not exist in a vacuum but dwells in the affective attachments it creates between individuals, spaces and materials. 'Sound' was insufficient to keep the band together. 'Composition', writes Jaques Attali in *Noise*, is 'participation in collective play' and 'an ongoing quest for new, immediate communication, without ritual and always unstable', during which the individual discovers 'his own body and potentials' (1985: 135, 141). When this quest ceased to be plentiful, when the ordinary affects of '*something* coming together' stopped setting in motion this potential (Stewart 2007: 2), music became meaningless. The harmony of collective music-making could not be replaced by musical harmony as such. It is evident though that, as a sensuous stimulus, sound unleashes impulses that cannot be disentangled from a plurosensory

environment in which visceral responsiveness depends upon audition as a visual, tactile and kinaesthetic construal (see also Hirschkind 2006: 101).

Joining my voice with anthropological approaches to the senses, I hope to have shown empirically that the dominance of visualism in the 'West' is in practice a *fiction,* alas its hegemony still persists and normally dismisses the suggestions regarding the cardinal importance of other senses as forms of 'exoticization' (Howes 2003: 51). Conversely, while I endorse Hirschkind's succinct argument about *active* listening that has historically escaped scholarly vistas, my ethnographic findings do not call for an 'acoustemology' or a 'sounded anthropology' nor for the privileging of one sense (out of how many?) over the others but, as I noted above and as Hirschkind demonstrates, for attention to the sensuous interplay that sonic landscapes in everyday life demand and amplify.

The ethnographic example of *Divorce* and their relationships with their audiences, equipment and themselves show that affective intensities as undiluted potentials are not 'things' transmitted between bodies, but exactly the opposite: it is embodied subjects that circulate through the medium of affect, which engenders and enables their self-fashioning and the constitution of particular forms of social relations (Richard & Rudnyckyj 2009). While affect is not an epiphenomenon of action, but rather one of its integral and structuring components, it still retains its indeterminacy and its potential as capacity or tendency.

The formation of and the 'dynamic' within a band or the sense of *communitas* in performance are molded by affective conditions, but both, as we have seen, retain their contingency. Thus, it is the propelling intensities of affect that shape bands without foreclosing their potential and not bands giving rise to (affective) music. Adapting William James's famous formulation (1884: 190), we could argue that we are compelled to make music *because* we make music in a way that brings plenitude and satisfaction.

However, the deployment, refinement and extension of these affective traces belong to the dimension of the ethical.

As I have attempted to illustrate in this chapter these affective properties are not intrinsic to individuals, themselves sovereign subjects, but to relational processes of self-cultivation and formation: the care of the self. Music practice supports the conviction that we must understand ethics not as an abstract and universal set of moral dicta, but instead observe them in actions of self-formation in which different ethical subjects require the cultivation of different *bodily* capacities. As such, bodies are not mere reflections of social, cultural or ethical norms but are palpable examples of *how* different corporeal practices forge and enact different ethical subjects (Mahmood 2005: 139).

It is evident that what we call 'affect' dramatically impacts upon the formation of particular bodily dispositions and therefore ethical sensibilities. But ethical becoming adheres to *conscious* practices and work that actors put into transforming themselves into ethical subjects. Affects as autonomic visceral responses cannot deliver the complexities and nuances of action, any more than the autonomous *cogito* can account for the intersubjective nature of ethics. In embracing the 'visceral habits of perception' (Connolly 2002: 46), we should underscore, with Leys (2011), that an inherently organic view of affect not only undermines the role of intentionality and reason, but such physiological-autonomic registers depend upon a sharp mind-body dichotomy. By privileging the corporeality of action, Massumi and other affect theorists conceive of the mind as disembodied consciousness, thus risking a biological essentialism that reinforces rather than counters the spectre of Cartesian dualism (see Papoulias & Callard 2010).

Rather than pondering on the 'meaning' of affect, I have chosen to focus on the body as an affective locus with which to highlight the conjunctions between body and mind, affect and cognition, in the emergence of ethical subjects. Instead of engaging in a futile

attempt to explicate music's irrationality or falling into a neo-vitalist 'illusion' of unmediated experience (Mazzarella 2009: 303), I opted to ground my analysis in the *movement* from affective immanence to conscious ethical action, in the 'resonance' or the 'feedback', that is the distance between affective sensation, perception and relational ethical action. I hold that this is something that can be accomplished and described ethnographically, and this is what I have attempted to do, however partially, above.

Because the body is never a *tabula rasa*, and taking into account the empirical impossibility of 'catching' these past traces, we could explain, following Bergson, '*not how perception arises, but how it is limited*' (1988 [1896]: 40), how it is 'qualified', channeled and routinized through technologies of ethical formation. The fecundity of affect lies in its potential to open up ways of studying how and, crucially, *why* particular ethical orientations and bodily dispositions emerge through the linkages of affective regimes, sensory-motor capacities, cultural mediations and ethical work. Hirschkind's ethnography is exemplary in that respect. 'An agile body was to a flexible mind as comportment was to character', writes Geurts for the Anlo (2005: 171). Affects are not opposed to reason, and the somatic works in relation to the psychological to give rise to the ethical. The primacy of one over the other obscures our endless and simultaneous movement between immanence and qualification, as well as the reciprocality and relationality of our bodies and psyches in our quest for an ethical life.

Chapter 5: Cry Parrot

5.1 I Just Want to Be Ethical

If corporeal instrumentality is central to ethical self-formation through music practice, then how can we grasp from an ethical standpoint the music practices that do not directly engage the body? More specifically, how do we approach ethically the 'musicking' (Small 1998) of non-musicians? This chapter discusses the practices of *Cry Parrot* (hereafter CP), a local DiY music promoter.[110] While in the previous two chapters I focused upon the participatory and bodily aspects of music-making and their respective significances in urban life and ethical becoming, here I turn from forms of music sharing to promotional practices and from affect to judgement.

As will become apparent, although CP had benefitted from the intermittent presence of various individuals, it was mainly under the creative control of one person, Stuart. As such, my discussion revolves around Stuart's promotional techniques and the consideration of the practical judgements that informed and shaped his conduct. But how were Stuart's promotional practices different from the tactics of WSP? According to Colin:

> It's a whole different thing really. It used to be more blurry, but over the last year it's become more clear. I guess he's an independent promoter who puts on bands, whereas we've still got a little bit of this DiY hangup...I don't see why he's the only guy that isn't a getting a cut, if that's the case, when you have these big gigs and Monorail are selling tickets and they're making money off that, and the bands are making a career out of touring, and then, you know, the venue is getting their bar cut and everyone is getting paid...I mean, I think for him it's like a network and he obviously likes music as well, but it doesn't totally seem a fair set-up to me.

Thus, CP and WSP *were* different, but the extent to which this difference was translated in Stuart's wholesale conversion remains to be seen. In my effort to account for the ethical modalities of his judgements and actions pertinent to this shift, I follow

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[110] On the role of promoters in live music, see Brennan and Webster (2011), Frith *et al* (2013) and Webster (2011).

Faubion's *Anthropology of Ethics* (2011). Faubion's framework takes as its starting point Foucault's writings on ethics. Foucault's model has not been taken as a blueprint for the study of ethical conduct – and rightly so (Mahmood 2005: 30). What Faubion's book does is undertake a painstaking reformulation of Foucault's parameters of the ethical field, thus providing important revisions.[111]

In the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault identifies four elements in the ways in which subjects conduct themselves in relation to 'rules' or moral codes: the 'determination of the ethical substance' [*substance éthique*], that is, 'the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself as the prime material of his moral conduct' *vis-à-vis* the moral code (1985: 26). The different ways in which individuals relate to moral precepts further point to the 'mode of subjection' [*mode d'assujettissement*]: 'the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice' (ibid.: 27).[112]

The third parameter involves the forms of 'elaboration or ethical work' [*travail éthique*] that 'one performs on oneself' in order 'to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behavior' and 'not only in order to bring one's conduct into compliance with a given rule' (ibid.). The final characteristic is the *telos* of ethical conduct: the accomplishment and establishment 'of a moral conduct that commits an individual' primarily 'to a certain mode of being, a mode of being characteristic of the ethical subject', rather than 'only to other actions always in conformity with values and rules' (ibid.: 28). All four parameters involve one's relationship with oneself. This is:

> [N]ot simply "self-awareness" but self-formation as an "ethical subject", a process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this

[111] Faubion also draws heavily on the work of other figures, such as Max Weber and Niklas Luhmann.

[112] 'Subjectivation' is a better translation. Insofar as 'subjection' and 'subjugation' signify authoritarian imposition and total lack of freedom or self-determination, they fall outside the ethical domain (Faubion 2011: 45, 49). For Foucault, 'a slave has no ethics' (1997: 286).

> requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself (Foucault 1985: 28).

Foucault's ethical apparatus was not completed and thus exhibits limitations that invite adjustments. Foucault's subsequent lectures (2005) attest that he was preoccupied with *parrhêsia*, the reflexive practice of truth-telling. This specificity of Foucault's approach, Faubion explains, fails to formally register 'ethical complexity', that is, the possibility of actors striving towards multiple ethical goals, and the ways in which different subjects (not necessarily 'individuals') relate to one another. With this in mind, Foucault's mode of subjectivation refers to the ways in which subjects relate to moral codes or rules, but does not acknowledge that these variegated deontological possibilities may also include ethical exemplars (see e.g. Humphrey 1997), ideals or 'role models' that compel subjects to undertake ethical work beyond duty. Foucault's construal of ethics retains an ancient Greek personalism and disregards the ethical centrality of exemplars.

An important consequence of this is that his analytical evaluation of ethics does not adequately elucidate the intrinsic role of the ethical 'other', especially in the form of the ethical pedagogue: someone who provides an ethical example, and not in the narrow sense of an 'instructor'. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that, for Foucault, the care of the self always involves others. Faubion has shown elsewhere (2001a) that Foucault's quasi-Aristotelian rendering of ethics has an essential pedagogical element to it. Ethics must be taught. Contrary to Aristotle's conception of ethics as *praxis*, Foucault perceives ethical becoming as a process of *poiêsis* – as 'self-making' and not merely as homeostatic replication or 'doing'. This ultimately engenders a certain analytical asymmetry by overemphasizing one's capacity for self-determination over pedagogy and the subject's adherence to the 'rule'. A final lacuna detected by Faubion concerns the decisive role of ethical judgements in shaping the subject's ethical *telos*, a capacity that is not formally addressed in Foucault's work.

For Faubion, the ethical domain can be described in two different ways:

> One: it is a domain of the development of one or another competent and conscious exercise of the practice of freedom. Another: it is a domain of the development of the potential occupant into the actual occupant of a subject position in and from which the conscious practice of freedom is exercised...The subject position – or subject, more briefly put – is always socially, culturally and historically specific (2011: 36).

Faubion embraces Foucault's parameters of ethical substance and *telos*, while he acknowledges the importance of ethical work or *askêsis*, epitomized by the technologies of the self. The latter's particular importance lies in the subject's capacity of self-intervention or 'autopoiesis': '[T]he self's production of itself' (ibid.: 5). Technologies of the self are reflexive and, frequently, self-reflexive instruments but, due to the intrinsically pedagogical nature of the ethical domain, they could also be effected with 'the help of others' (Foucault 1997: 225, but see ibid.: 177). The decisive role of the pedagogue is primarily manifested in Foucault's final parameter, specifically in how the trainee's mode of subjectivation is determined. Foucault's second and slightly altered definition of the mode of subjectivation as 'the way in which people are invited or incited to recognize their moral obligations' (ibid.: 264), attests to the fact that 'ethical practice proceeds after all in the middle voice, actively and passively often at one and the same time' (Faubion 2011: 50)

The mode of subjectivation has, according to Faubion, two additional facets: the process of recruitment to, and selection of, a subject position and, second, that position's scope, structure and priority. The former highlights the ascriptive and self-appointed blend of a subject's ethical positioning and that the (self-)assignation of such a position is usually a long-term process involving personal choice and training *vis-á-vis* pedagogical supervision and instruction. The latter alludes to the ethical complexity of any given subject position.

Faubion formally restores the cardinal importance of judgement by adding to these four parameters the mode of ethical judgement. This provides insight into how subjects problematize rather than blindly follow the 'rule', affords the recognition of the existence of heterogeneous normativities, and gives credence to Foucault's intuition that

ethical subject and ethical discourse are not independent but interdependent (Faubion 2011: 69-70). This last parameter can be broken down to the mode of ethical valuation, which concerns the establishment of ethical criteria and accordingly the decision of who or what is the subject of ethical regard; and to the mode of ethical justification that includes the discursive formations whereby ethical orientation towards practice is determined. That the subject's ethical subjectivation is mediated by the mode of judgement suggests that subjects may often exhibit behaviour that is simultaneously ethical and 'immoral' (Stafford 2010: 188).

One of the indispensable features of the framework proposed by Faubion is the grounding of ethics within the intersubjective, without falling into the Durkhemian 'social'. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, in Faubion's schema the ethical encompasses the moral or the 'themitical'.[113] Faubion acknowledges that his 'diagnostics' for *An Anthropology of Ethics* is one among many (2011: 13). However, I hope that the ways in which his adjustments to Foucault's model are relevant to my own work are becoming apparent.

In what follows, I attempt to demonstrate ethnographically the ethical nature of Stuart's involvement in live music promotion, the concrete practices associated with the process of hosting bands, as well as the ideas and values that informed his *modus operandi*. In doing so, I trace a gradual conversion from a DiY mode of conduct to what could be labelled 'independent promotion'. By delving into promotional practices, negotiations

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[113] After the Greek *themitos:* '[A]llowed by the laws of the gods and of men, righteous' (Faubion 2011: 24). With this distinction Faubion registers 'a series of cognitive, affective, semiotic, pragmatic and structural differences between the more ecological and dynamic [ethical] and the more homeostatic and reproductive [themitical] aspects of ethical autopoiesis – the becoming and maintenance of the ethical subject...The themitical dimension of the ethical field is hardly without its own dynamics, but they belong largely to the order of the reproduction of what at any particular place and point in time constitutes the regnant normative order, though in its normativity an order that may include values, ideals and exemplars as well as imperatives...The broader ethical field to which the themitical is internal must always also have one foot at least in the dynamics of production, of becoming, indeed of self-becoming...The themitical [is] less mutable. It partakes of whatever longevity the autopoietic system of whose normativity it is the valorization can boast. [We should not] mistake the normativity...for the themitical itself....[E]thical value and themitical normativity stand in a weakly dialectical relationship to one another...[H]owever inextricable their relation may be, the ethical retains a certain priority over the themitical (ibid.: 20, 24, 114).

and judgements, I demonstrate both the centrality of such processes to the successful organization of music events and their resonance to Stuart's ethical conditioning.

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To put it another way, this chapter provides an account of Stuart's ethical subjectivation. The events and processes pertinent to his ethical recruitment and selection and their attendant pedagogical and subjective dimensions will be made explicit. Following the discussion of the constitution of Stuart's mode of subjectivation is a consideration of the various exercises or *askêseis*, both pedagogical and reflexive, that Stuart had undertaken in his effort to become the occupant of a subject position. Thinking and conversing were two exercises that problematized his promotional routines and gradually led to a shift in his practice. This shift was initiated by a specific event. Not only did this event trigger a form of ethical questioning regarding his conduct, but eventually resulted in the expansion of Stuart's subject position. Exercising judgement was crucial to this process. Finally, I will discuss Stuart's ethical complexity, that is, the scope, structure and priority of his subject position, before proceeding to the examination of his ethical *telos* and substance. The point here is to address ethics in a manner that is intrinsically ethnographic. Hence, what precedes the consideration of the parameters of Stuart's ethics is an ethnographic account of two music events that empirically exemplify his conversion.

5.2 From Rags to Riches

During our interview in the West End Stuart invited me to a CP event that would take place the following evening. I arrived at the Glasgow Central train station after my interview with Eileen from *Synergy Concerts* in Rosebank (near Motherwell). It was already late and I still had no idea where 'Mitchell's', the venue for the night's gig, was situated. No address was provided by Stuart on the CP website.[114] I called Stuart on his

[114] http://cryparrot.co.uk/ [Accessed 21 March 2013].

mobile phone but he did not pick up. As I was walking along Sauchiehall Street I asked various people about the location of the venue, including members of staff at nearby restaurants and bars. *Idlewild* were playing at the ABC that night, so there were a lot of people queueing outside.

I was wandering around the GSA area off Sauchiehall Street when I met two young men who advised me to walk towards the Mitchell Library which was right next to the venue, on North Street. I walked all the way down Sauchiehall Street past Nice'n'Sleazy and reached the motorway. I was now standing outside the library but there was no sign of the venue. I called Stuart once more but to no avail. It was my first CP event and it seemed that I would miss it. I was ready to head back to Queen Street train station, when my phone rang: it was Stuart. I hung up and called him back straight away and while I was doing so I spotted him across the street. The venue was a few yards away from the library.

Mitchell's was a small pub that had previously been called the Ivy Bar (see also Chapter 3). Stuart explained that Mitchell's was free to hire for live music performances but, since a sound system was not installed, appropriate equipment had to be carried to the venue in order to set it up for a gig. When we arrived, there was loud music pouring out of the main entrance. A karaoke session was scheduled for but the pub was yet to become busy. The clientele were mainly middle-aged. The venue was spread over two floors, meaning that the gig would take place downstairs at a small basement area, which I estimated that it had a capacity of forty people at best. As I entered, on the right there were musical instruments and other pieces of equipment placed on the ground, including two drum kits, guitar amplifiers, a vintage wooden case containing effects pedals, as well as a table on which Stuart had placed his laptop and a plastic cup full of change. Occupying half of the basement's space, the music equipment also served as the only visual boundary between the 'stage' and the area designated for the audience. On the left there was a small corner bar surrounded by a handful of high stools.

Stuart introduced me to the three people in the main area: Eliot, *Quack Quack*'s drummer; Stephen, who played the guitar in *Sexy Entourage*;[115] and Barry (see also Chapter 3). Barry told me that he had 'nothing to do with tonight's gig' but added that he had lent his guitar amplifier to the bands, pointing towards a medium-sized dark blue Fender. He would later go to Stereo to attend a monthly club night called *Harsh 70's Reality* in which *Moon Unit* would perform.[116] *Moon Unit* was *Sexy Entourage* drummer Craig's second band. He had arrived in the meantime. Stuart had brought a large plastic food container filled with pasta. He had cooked for the bands, while members of *Quack Quack* would sleep in one of Stuart friends' flat tonight. While I was chatting with Barry, Stuart was trying to connect the sound mixer and the main speakers to his laptop. He was sorting out the cables in his effort to play some background music before the event kicked off, but eventually he decided to use his laptop speakers because changing the set-up was seemingly complex and time-consuming.

It was just after 9pm, the event's scheduled start time, but there were no more than fifteen people in the venue – including band members. Barry placed the cover charge for the night (£3) in the plastic cup and I did the same. Stuart had welcomed everyone in a friendly manner and the atmosphere felt quite intimate and relaxed. Most of the people arriving at the venue seemed to already be familiar with each other. They introduced themselves to those with whom they were unacquainted, such as myself. A young man named Chris joined Barry and myself and he turned out to be one of the members of the *Nuts and Seeds* music collective (Chapter 1) and the band *Dananananaykroyd* [*sic*].

Stuart looked a little disappointed at the low turnout, which, according to him was due to the *Idlewild* gig, as well as another one taking place on the same night. However, by the time *Sexy Entourage* were ready to begin their set more than thirty people were in the audience and the basement was packed. 'Every time it's like this, you don't know

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[115] The event's line-up consisted of these two bands. *Quack Quack* were a band from Leeds that retained close ties with the DiY network in Glasgow.

[116] The night, which proved to be short-lived, was named after the fourth LP of the *Dead C*, a band from New Zealand.

what will happen in the end', Stuart told me. After the bands' brief sets, I left Mitchell's with a feeling that I had been to a friendly musical gathering rather than what could be termed as a 'gig'.

Stuart kept on hosting such small and intimate gigs but overtime both the musical scope and the presentation of his events evolved and diversified considerably. Almost a year after that evening at Mitchell's, John Maus, a North American musician, was touring the UK, and Stuart had booked him for a Glasgow event at Mono, which he was expecting to sell out. I had reserved my ticket online weeks in advance because if a show sold out there were no exceptions to be made. When I arrived at Mono, people were standing outside, including Nigel and his dog, and I noticed a board stand with a poster advertising tonight's event.[117] Inside the venue there was a table on the left with John Maus's merchandise, among which a white t-shirt with a black John Maus figure singing and a logo underneath saying 'I saw John Maus Live!', as well as his second album release on vinyl and the first one on CD. There was also a vinyl record for sale by *Plug*, who would also perform that night.[118] The show was to be opened by Cameron, who was performing solo as *Remember Remember* (see also Chapter 4). On the right, there was a wooden platform that was normally used as a stage.

Tom from *Crasier Frane* was sitting behind the table along with Alan, who occasionally helped Stuart with the gigs.[119] I showed them the booking reference number by the online ticket retailer and received a red 'CP' marker on my right wrist. Stuart, who was standing nearby, expressed his excitement about the gig and stated that he had made a substantial effort to promote it by printing and distributing a hundred A8 posters across the city and constantly updating CP online social media. This was understandable

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[117] Nigel, a Mono regular, was a highly sociable man in his seventies who would regularly attend music events taking place in the venue.

[118] Both John Maus and *Plug* released music on *Upset the Rhythm*, a London-based music collective, promoter and label. Stuart regarded them as 'the point of reference for DiY in the UK'. For their 'statement of intent', see http://www.upsettherhythm.co.uk/about.shtml [Accessed 23 January 2013].

[119] *Crasier Frane* was a local online (and occasionally printed) music fanzine. See http://www.crasierfrane.com/ [Accessed 23 January 2013].

considering that John Maus was one of Stuart's favourite acts. He also commented upon the t-shirt and the fact that it looked 'a bit cheesy, but then', he added, 'it is good cheese and it only costs £5'. I asked him what time Cameron would go on stage and after consulting his watch Stuart replied that he would start 'in 7 minutes'.

I walked around the venue to find a place to sit, but the sitting area behind the merchandise table was already full. Mono had almost reached capacity and only the open area in front of the small stage was unoccupied. The bar, opposite the stage, was also busy with people queuing for drinks. Therefore, I decided to go and stand next to the fermentation tanks along the wall, which meant that I would be close to the stage.[120] I could see Stacy and Cameron standing at the bar and Cameron's equipment was already set up on the stage. Cameron's set lasted half an hour and the audience seemed to have enjoyed *Remember Remember*'s performance despite that they were standing away from the stage.[121] I was chatting with Stacy and Cameron outside when Alistair arrived. We started talking about the *Divorce* gig the following evening at the GSA and Alistair informed us that there would be a guest list. In fact, Eileen from *Synergy*, who promoted the gig, had allowed the band to add to the list as many 'guesties' as they pleased.

Back inside, I bumped into Colin from WSP at the bar. He was anticipating the gig with excitement and we started speculating about John Maus's performance. He then suddenly changed the topic and showed me a box on the bar containing purple poppy pins that were produced and sold in order to honour the *animals* killed during wartime, a move that was consonant with the vegan ethic of the venue. As I was talking to Colin I also saw Graham passing by. Although a few months earlier he had been employed by a well-known local music promoter – something which had led to the termination of his collaboration with Stuart – he would still attend most CP events.

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[120] Mono also produced its own drinks including organic lemonade, ginger beer and ale.

[121] Audiences would regularly stand around the front side of the stage, thus forming what is locally known as the 'Glasgow horseshoe'.

Tonight there were no technical issues or delays and Stuart seemed happy and relaxed. The area next to me was full of people coming closer and closer to the stage, including two photographers. After Plug's set and John Maus's dramatized performance the lights and music went back on to signal that the gig was over. From what I could see the t-shirt proved quite popular and many people were holding them up checking their size. As I was leaving Mono, Stuart was standing right outside the entrance saying goodbye to each one of us. He was holding a pile of flyers that advertised music events organized by Bryony from *Tracer Trails* who was standing on the opposite side of the door, also giving away flyers.[122] I asked Stuart whether I could take the poster from the board stand and he agreed.

5.3 Junior Nuts and Seeds

I initially met Stuart through Alistair who had also put me in touch with WSP (Chapter 3). What has been given: a Motherwell native, Stuart was still residing there at the time of my fieldwork along with the rest of his family and he would commute to Glasgow by train. In his early twenties, he was a good-natured and instantly likeable person. The 'given' encompasses several other more specific modalities according to Faubion and of which an individual might be conscious or unconscious. For that reason, and depending on the individual's capacity to embrace or reject such 'given' conditions, the distinction between what is given and what is contingent is not absolute (2011: 124-126).

Education provides a good example of this. As a process of acquisition of or endowment with a specific *habitus*, it can be seen as a modality of the given. However, as Bourdieu himself shows (1984: 135), education – at least in its latter phases – cannot be said to belong strictly to the 'unconscious'. After all, as a gradual process of acquisition, education is not a case of instantaneous ascription but instead corresponds with a domain of future possibilities. For example, when I started my research Stuart

[122] Bryony was a music promoter who organized events in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. She occasionally collaborated with Stuart (see below).

was still doing a degree in TV and Film Studies at the University of Glasgow. Shortly after his graduation in June 2010 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) announced its plans to abolish the UK Film Council, a decision that had left Stuart wondering about the usefulness of his degree, as well as his employability: 'I have a better CV in event management' he told me, characteristically hinting at his accumulated practical experience.

During his university years Stuart had a job at the supermarket chain Morrison's. More recently, he had started DJing in bars and music venues, mainly in Captain's Rest and Nice'n'Sleazy. He would also 'guest DJ' in venues such as the Flying Duck. Despite what one might expect, Stuart was not a musician. Stuart continued his DJing activities after graduation and at the end of that summer he took up a six-month internship at the Centre of Contemporary Arts (CCA). In October he became the music programmer for Nice'n'Sleazy and a few months later, after his internship had finished, he took over the schedule for the venue's club nights as well. While the CCA internship required him to work in the Centre from 10am-6pm on weekdays, the job at Nice'n'Sleazy was quite flexible and allowed Stuart to work remotely from the comfort of his home.

Stuart's education and work experience exemplify how 'the given' folds into the contingent, as well as illustrating the complex process of recruitment to (and selection of) a subject position. An ethical role rarely involves only direct ascription or personal achievement. Instead, the mode of determination of ethical subjectivation is always a mixture of both. Subject positions necessitate the ethical conditioning of the subject around deontological axes, but also through his or her living up to specific exemplars, values and ideals encapsulated by ethical pedagogues. Because of their distinctive ethical standing, such figures usually operate as recruiters.

Stuart had two such recruiters: one was *Nuts and Seeds* (NaS). Stuart praised their practice, which involved a substantial amount of care towards the bands they catered for. Stuart followed their steps closely and as NaS decided to cease their activities he

inherited the ‘chrism’, becoming ‘junior NaS’. This is how several individuals initially referred to CP. The demise of NaS had inflicted a blow on the local DiY stream of activity, a situation which CP and to a lesser extent WSP were striving to remedy. In other words, Stuart was working towards the occupation of that subject position, yet not precisely as we shall see.

Stuart was also inspired by local club promoters and music collective *LuckyMe*, who exhibited various characteristics that Stuart sought to implement in CP, such as memorabilia, a party atmosphere, as well as a forward-looking and expansive outlook. It was clear, as the second ethnographic example attests, that there was an underlying preoccupation with quality in Stuart’s promotional practices (see also below). One tangible example was CP posters, which in the local scheme of things were among the best designed. Even established promoters with substantial revenue did not invest as much time and effort in making their posters more than a carrier of the necessary information.

Stuart believed that the main reason for the recent resurgence and persistence of DiY music in Glasgow was a common dissatisfaction with local promotion companies and their practices. This dissatisfaction largely stemmed from the notorious ‘pay-to-play’ policy (Introduction & Chapter 6). Therefore, Stuart’s recruitment was fueled by positive examples on the one hand and by an example to be avoided on the other. This calls for a consideration of the process of ascription not only as an externally imposed condition, but additionally as a process of self-appointment and a matter of considered choice that is opposed to the qualities of those considered to be ethically abject (Faubion 2011: 61-62).

A fourth mode of recruitment was the name under which Stuart organized music events. In the same manner that ‘junior NaS’ ascribed him to a particular subject position, the name chosen for his promotional activities bore ethical weight. As I have shown in Chapter 3, names and their primary signifiers have more than a contingent relationship.

It will become apparent that, contrary to the attitude of WSP towards their institutional name, Stuart valued the *Cry Parrot brand*. However, names (or labels, see below) do not overdetermine the content, which oscillates between the 'tyranny of the name' and self-determination. As such, they count 'simply as one type of recruitment, and a type of uncertain outcome' (Faubion 2011: 159). Stuart said that:

> I can't remember what it was named after, and it was just kind of a crazy name. I look back and I guess people remember it. I've kept it on and I guess it's got almost a humourous, colourful aspect about it, it's not cold...I think it's just an unusual thing to name altogether. And in a way I'm kind of glad about it. I think it is a ridiculous name and genuinely makes no sense.

It was actually Blake, Stuart's high-school friend who named *Cry Parrot*. The idea of forming CP, then, goes back to when Stuart was in high school. Stuart and Blake were discussing the possibility of organizing gigs, but it was only in university that they managed to put their ideas into practice. Although Stuart initially considered it a joint project, he later felt that Blake was not as committed and determined as he was, thus Stuart ended up running CP on his own two years after launching it.

Shortly after Blake's departure, Stuart recruited Graham and this is how CP was set up when I began my fieldwork. The first time I met Stuart he presented CP to me as a joint effort between Graham and himself. Catherine, Stuart's girlfriend at the time, would contribute to the production of posters and flyers, as well as offering support during gigs. In October 2010, Graham left CP in order to take up a job with a well-known local promoter, from which time he was not allowed to take part in CP activities due to a perceived conflict of interest. Just a few months earlier Aidan had stepped in, and went on to become Stuart's 'right hand man'. He remained in this position for almost a year, but he eventually had to leave due to his other commitments, such as running the University of Glasgow's Subcity Radio, where Anna from *Divorce* also hosted a show. In the meantime, Stuart and Catherine had broken up. By the time my field research was coming to an end, CP had become an individual affair: 'It's me on my own really', Stuart declared to me that June.

Even when other individuals were involved in the organization of events they seemed to play a peripheral role. This was evidenced by the ways in which Stuart assessed, albeit hesitantly, their influence on him and CP, saying that his ideas about music promotion had been unaffected by Graham, Aidan and his other former affiliates. However, Stuart acknowledged their dedication, passion and acute awareness of all things musical. That Stuart had been all along the main creative force behind CP could also be illustrated by his supervisory role. For example, when Graham selected the bands for some of their events Stuart still had the final word. Moreover, when Stuart booked *Hype Williams* in November 2010 as the main act for one of their gigs, he instructed Aidan to book the support bands. Consequently, according to Stuart, his associates did have a degree of creative control but the operation as a whole was overseen and commanded by him.

Retaining control of CP's creative output was the outcome of Stuart's sense of ownership stemming from his accumulated knowledge of live music promotion, not to mention the deeply personal attachment to CP he had fostered over the last five years. In essence, then, CP had been Stuart's project all along and he would assign specific tasks to certain people depending upon the circumstances at hand. Crucially, in doing so, Stuart assigned *himself* to a specific subject position. To put it differently, one's ability to *act,* as an intrinsically ethical property (Lambek 2010b), underscores processes of self-ascription to and selection of a subject position. Stuart described the functioning of CP as follows:

> It's ultimately me and I delegate jobs to certain people. For the website I can get a guy – he's one of my friends. Some people help out with posters and I've got a collection of people who would help out on the door. Basically people involved to do more basic jobs, whereas I do all the organization and all the programming and all the delegation. That simplifies it in a way. I think if you're going to have someone as a co-curator – if you may use that as a word – or a co-delegator, a co-organizer or whatever, you have to be on a similar level...Because what I do takes up a lot of my time thinking, and it takes up a lot of my time organizing other things, obviously it's quite hard to get into the mindset of what works too.

The functioning of CP demonstrates that it had a hierarchical nature. However, it gives credence to the argument that an anthropological treatment of the ethical field cannot be

squarely centered upon the individual but on subjects who strive to occupy or who pass through positions (Faubion 2011: 119). Not only these subjects may be relational, as in the case of *Divorce*, or collectives, as WSP were, but the ethical positions themselves are also highly complex. Apart from the aforementioned frequent collaborators, Stuart would also engage other people into the project, such as Alan who was on the door at the John Maus event, or when, for example, he had to make arrangements to accommodate the touring bands for the night. As he did not reside in Glasgow, for this Stuart relied on his friends, usually from local bands. Visitors would sleep on 'couches, floors or mattresses' and to return the favour he enlisted his friends' bands for future events. Similarly, he expected local bands to engage in promoting the event themselves, in order to attract at least a small number of people, such as their friends, family and other acquaintances.

Despite his multiple concurrent activities in the city Stuart was living in Motherwell and he had only moved to Glasgow for a short period of time, during which he had a flat in the Hyndland area in the West End. The main reason why he lived elsewhere was his financial situation, which changed for the better once his unpaid internship was terminated and his work hours for Nice'n'Sleazy were increased to 30-40 per week. As a result, when I finished my fieldwork Stuart was already in the process of moving to Glasgow. Looking outside the music world, Stuart was also feeling comfortable in Glasgow: 'I think my network is here and all my friends are here and quite happy as well'. As such, the city and its specificity, its built environment and its social and cultural heritage (Chapter 1), can be perceived as an auxiliary recruiter in the local musical landscape, a recruiter that did not assign but rather compelled Stuart towards becoming the occupant of his subject position. As Faubion puts it: 'Emplacement is not selection' (2011: 158; cf. Basso 1996).

As the distinction between ascription and achievement with regards to one's role is not clear-cut, the boundary between recruitment and selection is relative and porous. The latter, as opposed to recruitment, involves a process in which recruiters and ethical

pedagogues 'are less and less likely to have the character of molders and shapers and more and more the character of advisors' (Faubion 2011: 158). The gradual process of distancing himself from those who had hitherto been his recruiters found its expression in Stuart's ambiguous relation with the CP name, his increasingly instructive role towards his collaborators, his trajectory involving a refinement of his subject position, as well as in the creative deployment of urban resources, such as performance spaces. Selection is also the juncture at which the subject, in assigning himself to a specific position, has to reflect on it and consider the possibilities or alternatives available to him. This reflection or 'thought', is what Foucault calls 'problematization':

> It is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem (1997: 117).

Hence Foucault's characterization of ethics as the *conscious* practice of freedom; it is the process whereby actors consciously choose the kinds of subjects they wish to become by subsequently exercising and putting into practice their self-constituting freedom (Laidlaw 2002: 324; see also Foucault 1997: 200-201).

Places and objects are also important in the process of subjectivation and continue to impinge upon one's ethical becoming, but through the process of selection they are gradually transformed into 'ethical materials' that facilitate rather than constrain the becoming of the subject (see also Chapter 4). Such materials at once determined and facilitated Stuart's subjectivation. The money kept from successful gigs or fundraising events (see also Chapter 3) was not seen as profit *per se* but would be invested in memorabilia or future projects.[123] Stuart had recently produced stickers and badges with their logo to be given for free at music events, exactly as *LuckyMe* had done previously. These were seen as having a continuous effect after the gig and they could also help to spread the word about CP.

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[123] The relationship between DiY and non-profit is not clear-cut (see Chapter 6).

The importance of these tangible expressions was also evident in the fact that Stuart regularly complained about the lack of visual documentation of the gigs he promoted, something that he was planning to implement. Some money from the proceeds was also put into paying off the debt that Stuart had accumulated due to his involvement in music promotion. Stuart gradually raised the prices of CP gigs, which not only had become more expensive but were now ticketed as well (cf. Chapter 3). Issuing tickets, producing memorabilia such as badges, decorating the venues for performances, employing hand-made posters and expensive equipment for the shows, for example good sound installations or video projectors, demonstrated that 'stuff' mattered for Stuart, who was inclined to express his ideas through material forms in conjunction with CP's constant online presence.

These aspects of Stuart's ethical conditioning were crucial, not least because they concretely attested to a process of ethical routinization in accord with his subject position's themitical dimension, the scope and reproductive dimensions of which Stuart would subsequently seek to modify. Routinization itself is a fundamental mechanism of selection and, therefore, a reflexive way of being in the world, contrary to what Zigon contends (2007: 138; see also Chapters 2 & 6). The process of organizing and executing events appeared straightforward, especially considering their small-scale nature, so the experience of organizing several gigs had solidified Stuart's practice.

The volume of gigs that he promoted remained relatively stable during my fieldwork. Whereas initially Stuart had to confront various issues due to his lack of experience, he was now more confident about his efficiency as a music promoter. For Stuart, the organization of music events was formulaic and certain aspects should always be taken into account, including bookings, fees and combining appropriate bands in the line-up. Other considerations included communications, the production and distribution of promotional material, providing food and accommodation for the bands, setting-up performance spaces, and last but not least, arranging payment. In the following section I

examine the concrete practices that were involved in the promotion of music events, and which contributed towards Stuart's ethical becoming.

5.4 From DiY to Independent

What sorts of *askêseis*, what kinds of technologies did Stuart employ in 'achieving' or becoming the occupant of this subject position? The most important aspect, which preceded the formation of CP but kept on boasting Stuart's involvement in music promotion, was music itself. His interest in music could be said to constitute a final, but also critical recruiter in Stuart's ethical cosmos. But musical taste, as I have shown in the previous chapter, is not a metamodal condition of subjectivation in the sense that it solely reflects social status and education, as Bourdieu would argue (1984).

Taste and distaste are both pedagogical and reflexive technologies of ethical self-formation (Faubion 2011: 137-138). The vast majority of CP gigs featured bands and musicians whose music Stuart appreciated greatly, and the John Maus gig is a telling example. Musical predilections largely influenced choices about the content of Stuart's promotional practice as well as provided the thrust for his continuous preoccupation with promotion. The ongoing cultivation of musical taste was a necessary *askêsis* for the delineation of his subject position.

I mentioned that Stuart had been exposed to ethical examples that he could emulate, follow or avoid. However, he did not have a pedagogue in the form of an advisor or a 'master', whose presence and support would facilitate the self-examination of his thoughts and practices (see Foucault 1997: 233-234). Instead, Stuart had to take up that role himself in his collaborations with other individuals. The main criterion with which individuals were taken on board as Stuart's collaborators was a genuine interest in the musical diversity underpinning CP's practice. Both Graham and Aidan were recruited on the basis of attending CP gigs and showing an interest. Even when Graham moved to commercial music promotion, he continued to attend most CP shows. Stuart was

respectful towards Graham's decision, but he pointed out that Graham's new job to some extent dictated the breadth of his music-listening:

> I think ultimately he's interested in the same music as me, he's very much interested in all kinds of sounds and he gets really excited about independent music, but you know, obviously his job is strongly geared towards commercialism, so he has to listen to a lot of other stuff now as well.

As Martin Cloonan has argued, 'the more professional the promoter, the more they are subject to *other* people's tastes' (cited in Webster 2011: 38). CP did not occupy an office or any other establishment, and organizational matters were arranged mainly through email. Stuart's critical objective was to stay up-to-date with his inbox and initially he would approach bands or booking agents, but as CP shows were becoming increasingly popular and Stuart had managed to build a wide range of contacts in the music industry in and outside Glasgow, booking agents would also contact him with gig offers. His personal preferences aside, Stuart would also browse the line-ups of music festivals to identify bands that would fit within the musical scope of CP. He had hosted a wide range of musicians from the UK as well as abroad, with the latter mainly consisting of touring bands. This had the advantage of not incurring additional costs for travel and allowed Stuart to keep door and ticket prices to a minimum.

Local bands normally included young acts from Glasgow that would open the show for the headlining touring bands. Carefully choosing the line-up for these events constituted an important reflexive and self-reflexive exercise because it combined and balanced an array of factors such as Stuart's musical proclivities, logistics, and audience expectations. This process required a certain amount of organizational skills, but its ethical aspects were predicated upon a self-examination. This, according to Stuart, stemmed from the idea that promoters allegedly had 'big egos', expressed in their decisions about which shows to promote and which not. However, Stuart would try to remain open-minded regarding the musical aspects of CP and his job at Nice'n'Sleazy was a contributing factor:

> Through Nice‘n’Sleazy’s, I’ve been putting on bands I’m not as passionate about but I’d be open-minded to it, if I was to be offered something or something popped up that would fit.

Perhaps the most important *askêsis* was Stuart’s attitude and conduct towards finances. When Stuart launched CP, his jobs at Morrison’s and as a DJ sustained his practice. Later on, he would organize fundraising gigs – what he called ‘unofficial funding’ – and towards the end of my fieldwork he could still keep CP afloat thanks to his full-time wage from Nice‘n’Sleazy. For the most part, financial matters with touring bands were settled in advance. According to Stuart, 99% of the touring bands would ask for a guarantee, with Stuart being able to offer them between £50 and £80. If the turnout was satisfactory, all bands, including support acts, would receive additional funds. However, he made clear to local bands that he could not afford any guarantee for them in advance. When I enquired about how the bands responded to this, Stuart replied that most of them recognized that it was impossible to receive guarantees considering the small-scale character of these events, but that there were also acts that were more ‘career driven’.

As was the case for WSP and any other local DiY promoter, booking a venue for a music event was largely dictated by financial considerations and venue availability. Cheap or free venues were in high demand, and CP would regularly host their gigs in venues such as the 13th Note, CCA, and Mitchell’s during the first half of my fieldwork. In venues that did not employ sound engineers Stuart would pay his friends to do the sound, including Peter from WSP. Of integral importance and relevance to Stuart’s concern with finances was turnout. This was because he sought to cover expenses and not end up losing money. Although in most cases bands would receive more than what was initially agreed, sometimes up to £250 for successful shows, there were instances when gigs had produced a deficit. Door charges were kept low, with most gigs around £4-£5 but occasionally rising to £7-£8 for ‘bigger’ bands. Stuart believed that, by keeping the fees as low as possible, more individuals would have the opportunity to attend the gigs. This would be beneficial for the bands because he would

initially give all the proceeds to them minus the costs that would allow him to fund future ventures.

A particular approach towards money and financial decisions was thus informed and shaped by necessity but also from his will to support the bands and make CP gigs accessible to audiences. Moreover, this attitude was linked to a particular ethics of care (see also Chapter 3): despite his lack of financial resources, Stuart would try and accommodate bands for the night wherever possible. Another of Stuart's main principles was to provide food for musicians in the line-up, which, as I have mentioned, was a common practice of local DiY promoters from NaS onwards. The absence of luxury and comfort for the touring bands did not prevent them from responding positively about their host, and Stuart sought to ensure that bands were satisfied with their time in Glasgow by creating a pleasant atmosphere. For example, he would take the bands on short excursions around the city and spend time with them.[124]

Stuart would cater for bands' other requirements, which normally comprised of sourcing appropriate music equipment. It was not unusual for CP to carry a drum kit to the venue or for Stuart to negotiate instrument-borrowing between bands in the line-up. Part of creating a nice atmosphere for bands and audiences alike meant decorating event spaces. Although this was not always the case, and when it did happen the decor was usually not very elaborate, small touches seemed to be sufficient to transform a generic pub basement into a welcoming and cosy venue. I remember entering the 13th Note basement for a CP gig to find lit candles on the tables. I was also surprised that the usual scattered cables, instruments, rucksacks and other paraphernalia that were lying around in previous gigs had been tucked away. Then, for their Halloween party at the Vic Bar[125] large amounts of fake spider webs, a smoke machine and carved pumpkins were used in order to create an appropriate atmosphere.

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[124] The ethics of the 'host' is quite ambiguous (see Candea & da Col 2012). Stuart's hospitality could also be seen as part of his effort to preserve complete control over CP's organizational matters.

[125] Located in the Glasgow School of Art.

Promotion for these events would take the form of designing, printing and distributing posters and flyers, as well as through CP's dedicated website and relevant social media. Stuart stated that: 'From my experience overall, posters and flyers are *useless*' and that 'the Internet is the future of promotion'. However, posters would almost always be well-designed and colour-printed or on coloured paper (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Cry Parrot posters.[126]

This paradox can be explained by Sarah Thorton's observations about 'micro-media' in *Club Cultures*, where she notes that 'the most venerated are not necessarily the most actively engaged in convening crowds' (1995: 151). As I have already pointed out, the proliferation of last-minute events not only led me to join Twitter, but highlighted the

[126] Retrieved from http://www.oliverpitt.co.uk/ & http://cargocollective.com/moonshakedesign/POSTERS respectively [Accessed 23 March 2012].

instrumentality of ‘word-of-mouth’ in the congregation of crowds at those gigs (e.g. the ‘Satanic toga’ party). For Stuart, who always planned and announced his events in advance (cf. Chapter 3), word-of-mouth did not seem to play an important role, but as Thorton herself remarks, various promotional media feed into each other in sparking and preserving interest among audiences, while ‘micro-media’ as a whole are not set apart from less ‘grassroots’ forms of advertising. Indeed, CP events would occasionally be listed or reviewed in widely circulated free press magazines, such as *The Skinny*. Therefore, posters and flyers could be seen as processes of authentication contributing to the ‘visibility’ of CP and thus to the consolidation of its identity.

Although Stuart perceived CP posters and flyers as ineffective methods of promoting events, the actual process of distribution had an additional ethical meaning and pedagogical value. He once recounted how mainstream promoters expressed a dismissive attitude towards DiY gigs by placing their own posters right on top of the ones by DiY promoters (see also Chapter 1). Stuart half-jokingly mentioned to me that he was tempted to do the same as an ‘act of revenge’. However, Stuart was clearly against such a practice and he expected others to respect CP’s right to occupy poster space around the city. Fly-posting could be seen as a mundane process that, nevertheless, carried ethical connotations as well as symbolic value in its contestation of urban territories (Chapter 3).

Ethically speaking, the paradoxical nature of the process of crafting posters that were considered ineffective is interesting for another reason. Apart from the anticipated evolvement of promotional strategies due to technological innovations, this ‘paradox’ is also reflective of the complexity of ethical conditioning. In its pedagogical emphasis, ethical subjectivation goes beyond the mere reproduction or rejection of the themitical dimensions of the subject position to be occupied (Faubion 2011: 48-49). Conformity to the rule and action, imply a complex relationship that emerges in different degrees and variations. Otherwise, submission to the norms would become subjection, thus falling outside ethical threshold. As I have argued in the previous chapter, action allows

subjects to inhabit norms rather than oppose them or being completely subjected to them. Therefore, Stuart's continuation of the established practice of producing posters and flyers and his simultaneous opting for a more efficacious means to advertise gigs are not antithetical within his mode of subjectivation, because 'subject positions are malleable, if some more than others' (Faubion 2011: 4).

At different points along the evolution of CP, Stuart's reflexive thought was translated into practice. Halfway through my fieldwork Stuart announced that from then onwards he would issue tickets for all CP gigs. People would still have the option of paying on the door, but according to Stuart it was the realization that many audience members felt more comfortable and secure when buying tickets in advance. The plastic cup with change at Mitchell's that subsequently enjoyed recurring mentions in my fieldnotes, ultimately gave way to tickets that were sold by Monorail, the record shop hosted within Mono, and an online ticket retailer. The former charged a booking fee of 50p or £1 per ticket depending on the ticket price and the latter 10% of the ticket's face value. Listening and talking to the audience, therefore, as well as paying attention to their feedback were two additional pedagogical technologies through which Stuart *learned* and which urged him to implement changes by adjusting his promotional tactics.

The general transformation of CP practice was also evident in the bands that Stuart booked for the gigs. The process remained more or less similar, but the names that appeared on the bill were of much wider appeal. Promoting gigs and specifically the production of posters had also changed during the course of a year. Stuart would still seek to print posters in the least expensive way, but now he would print them in bulk, while allocating the production of flyers to specific online companies. Whereas in the past Catherine or Stuart's friends designed the posters, he was now using four different 'reliable', that is, professional 'poster people', who received £30 as a set fee for each design. Stuart was adamant that even if gigs produced a deficit, he still had to pay poster designers, something that he perceived both as a nice gesture and as an incentive for them to do good work.

The sites which hosted CP events were now mostly conventional venues, such as Mono, Stereo and Nice‘n’Sleazy. Ironically, the first time I met Stuart he had mentioned that Stereo and Nice‘n’Sleazy were somewhat expensive to hire for the level of the gigs he used to promote. A year later, Stuart was able to book Nice‘n’Sleazy for free, whereas some of his gigs would take place at Stereo. By employing well-known, mid-size venues Stuart could also minimize the risk of technical issues and avoid the need to carry and install a sound system for the night. Bigger bands meant additional expenses, however, because bands of such a calibre required hotel accommodation.

The money-factor had influenced other parts of the organizational process. Whereas in the past local bands were informed that payment depended on the turnout, Stuart would now provide guarantees to most bands. One direct result of such a policy was that he put himself at risk of losing (more) money, because the earlier losses were largely the outcome of guarantees for gigs that had failed to attract a substantial crowd. For example, when we were discussing about *This Is Our Battlefield* and their practices, Stuart mentioned that all members would still pay the cover charge for the gigs *they* hosted – something that Stuart initially did too – while they would never guarantee any money or take a cut off the proceeds to forward it to the next gig. For sure, the number of guarantees provided by Stuart was correlated with both an increased turnout at CP gigs and the anticipation of success of events featuring specific bands.

The shift in Stuart’s mode of conduct was influenced by his accumulated practical knowledge, his interaction with bands, audiences and other actors involved in music-making and, finally, by reflecting upon his own practice. Therefore, apart from ‘doing’, the process of thinking – perhaps the most self-conscious of Stuart’s technologies of self-fashioning, as well as discursive contexts, framed two decisive *askêseis* that encompassed and sharpened Stuart’s decision-making. Thinking is a reflexive process but conversation too offers the opportunity for continuous reflection, albeit one that is usually shot with new discoveries and realizations. As such, conversation is an

inherently pedagogical exercise (Faubion 2011: 264-265). Crucially, these two techniques and their application were mediated by judgements.

5.5 A Scene of Crisis

Stuart's ethical subjectivation to the themiticality of DiY live music promotion did not constitute a straightforward adoption of a script or a set of ideas and values to be put into practice. Reflexive action was a catalyst for his dissociation from the 'normative' that would become apparent over time. As such, the aforementioned changes in CP practice were not only the outcome of trial and error. They also punctuated a parallel conversion from a DiY register to an independent *modus operandi*. This ethical re-evaluation sheds light upon various aspects of Stuart's principles and conduct. This passage was marked by a specific event, an incident that compelled Stuart to diverge from the DiY example and adapt his routines accordingly. Although I did not observe an abrupt change in Stuart's practice, gradually CP veered away from a DiY blueprint as this had been inherited from NaS. If a 'turning-point' can be traced, then perhaps unsurprisingly it was related to Stuart's perspective on, and use of, financial resources:

> I think a big turning point for me was in January [2011], when I put on Moon Unit, a headline show, and it was in Nice'n'Sleazy's. There were two supports, both of which were local. 170 people paid in at £5, and, you know, I paid Moon Unit like £250 and gave their supports £130 each. And I just think to myself...I took £150 from that gig because, well, they're getting paid loads of money – I'm taking £150 and that's maybe forwarded to something, you know? Normally I would just give it, like, before, I would just give it all away. I think I was just quite intensely strict on the ethics.

This event (and no doubt many others to a lesser extent) gave rise to Stuart's questioning of what was themitical, what valorized, engendered and reproduced such 'strict' norms by encouraging DiY promoters to hand over all the proceeds to the performers.[127] This incident could be called a 'scene of crisis':

[127] The ethic of 'giving it away' was quite common but neither homogeneous nor evenly distributed across the DiY spectrum (Chapter 6).

> A scene of the unfamiliar or of disturbance, in which the experience of the disruption or of the failure of the reproduction of the routine is also the impetus of thought and action (Faubion 2011: 81-82).

Drawing upon Weber's analysis in his essay on charismatic authority (1946), Faubion discerns the following characteristics of such a scene (2011: 81-90): it is a moment when rationalization has dramatically decreased and in which themitical normativity has yet to be established. As such, the scene of crisis could be seen as *anethical* because ethical value remains non-routinized in this context. Because everyday routine has been suspended and because such a scene belongs to the unfamiliar and the extra-ordinary it is a moment that calls for reflection and urgent response. The floating and indeterminate quality of the ethical parallels charismatic authority in the latter's inevitably non-normative nature and lack of fixity.

The charismatic is incongruous with themitical regimens or institutional orders 'precisely because the charismatic leader reveals...the inadequacy of the established social and cultural order' (Faubion 2011: 83). Now, because he or she stands outside the normative order, it is only through the performance of 'extraordinary' acts that charisma can be retained and justified. Moreover, insofar as the ethical field is a social field, it is *only through his recognition of the ethical chrism of the other that ethics emerges*.

Assuming, however, the existence of a unilateral form of relation between charismatics and mere followers automatically places the latter outside the ethical domain by transforming subjectivation into subjection. This initially leads to the conclusion that the scene of crisis is devoid of ethics. Hence the need of the recognition of the chrism of the other. Although this gesture does not necessarily involve routinization, it nevertheless transcends the 'personal' and incites the delineation of the ethical ground upon which the charismatic 'collective' exists and operates. This distinguishes them from non-charismatic others. To the extent that the Weberian primal scene affords such gestures of recognition and as long as these acts do not constitute the establishment of themitical normativity, the scene of crisis is *neither ethical nor anethical.*

The inference that the scene of crisis and the ensuing extension of the chrism remain non-routinized recalls Zigon's moral breakdown and the resulting 'moment' when ethics must be performed (2007). However, Zigon's sharp distinction between moments of crisis and the 'unreflective mode of being in-the-world' fails to register what I have already mentioned, namely that routinization as a process of selection involves reflexivity. And as Faubion shows, such a rigid dichotomy is analytically disruptive of the pragmatic flow and continuity between the ethical and the themitical. Charismatics already entail traces of routinization and of the soon-to-become normative, not least in:

> [T]he beginnings of their transformation from exemplars of the anethical-becoming-ethical response to extraordinary circumstances into exemplars of the practices best suited to the themiticality of systems already in place and in need less of adjustment than of ongoing maintenance (2011: 112).

As such, the modulation of charisma holds the potential for ethical innovation and adjustment of what is already in place through its relation to themitical systems, rather than operating outside such regimes, thus giving rise to something anew.

Employing the allegoric essence of the Weberian scene allows me to adapt it to Stuart's subjectivation in order to describe the latter in comparable but ethnographic terms: the moment of 'crisis' urged Stuart realize that his habitual ways of promoting music events were problematic. Sensing that elements of his routinized practice, consonant with DiY ethics, failed to live up to the necessities of a long-term engagement with music promotion, he started questioning the themitical normativity of a DiY framework. The ethical possibilities opened up from such a problematization were by definition non-normative and non-routinized. Very quickly though, the anethical moment of crisis gave way to routinization, elements of which were already present in both the transformation of his thoughts into customary practice and, notably, in the sense that these practices were consonant with the normative logics and themitical principles of another register: that of the independent promoter.

The following questions immediately emerge: who was to be included in this ethical field? How would its ethical criteria be established and what kinds of judgements were pertinent to its realization? In other words, what was its mode of ethical valuation and justification?

5.6 The Stigma and the Dilemma

I mentioned that, for Stuart, two of the readiest technologies of the self were reflexive thinking and conversing with others. For Arendt, the activity (as opposed to action) of thinking as an ethical exercise is a form of self-fashioning (2003: 105). But as Lambek notes, citing Benhabib (2003), Arendt distinguished between thinking as objective and ethically neutral, and judgement as situated and communicative (2010a: 26). In transcending the distinction 'between freedom and obligation' or 'between conventional morality and charismatic innovation' judgement appears to Lambek to be more appropriate 'as the fulcrum of everyday ethics' (2010a: 26, 28; see also Chapter 2). Faubion also highlights how: 'Ethics demands judgement, which demands justification, which demands criteria of both diction and declamation, which demand functional language games' (2011: 96).

Thus, for Stuart, conversation as a discursive, intersubjective process seemed to be instrumental to the formation and establishment of ethical criteria through 'language games' (Wittgenstein 1958). The attachment of criteria to the terms of a discourse, though, does not clarify whether criteria precede or follow from agreement in judgement, while recourse to criteria usually implies disagreement (Lambek 2010b: 43). In Stuart's case, without taking the form of a debate or dispute, such a discursive interaction was occurring upon shifting grounds and ill-defined criteria (Chapter 6). Unavoidably, the terms DiY and independent were the two axes along which such discourse took place. The ultimate lack of consensus with regards to the content, definition or meaning of these terms, however, need not inhibit us from perceiving this ongoing process as an ethical discourse:

> Ethical discourse of even the most obstreperous lack of consensus and just short of complete collapse must still defer to a matrix of the justification of the use of its terms; otherwise, it would not constitute a discourse of any sort at all (Faubion 2011: 69).

DiY and its meaning had been a consistently favourite discussion topic between Stuart and myself. He seemed extremely interested in clarifying what was involved in the term as well as confused and frustrated by its volatile meaning. The plural ways in which it was interpreted and put into practice had been a common predicament within the DiY network (see Chapter 6). For Stuart, who was previously a 'DIY promoter' and lately had become 'an independent promoter with DiY ethics', thus distinguishing between DiY as a *label* and DiY as *practice*, providing a clear definition of DiY – or independent for that matter – was not an easy task. An attempt to provide some content for these terms is needed here. Stuart would frame independent as follows:

> It's as ambiguous as DiY...I guess [it describes] people or individuals, or acts less focused on a commercial aspect of the music and strongly focused on being creative? Creativity and a sense of going out and trying to do it yourself, rather relying on other people? Reading it back about how to define Cry Parrot now, this is an independent promoter with DiY ethics. It's something very fluid, I guess...

About DiY ethics he believed that:

> Again it's just like independency [*sic*], it's a strong focus on the arts, a strong focus on inclusivity, a strong focus on a scene and people being together; these are the ethics I think in my mind.

Notice how the two definitions not only share a similar level of ambiguity, but, in fact, they could be used interchangeably. Why then Stuart decided to discard the DiY label but retain its ethics? Moreover, why add 'independent' to it? To begin with, Stuart considered the former term problematic:

> DiY, I think, is something that was forged out of punk, but DiY also suffers from the stigma of "laziness". If someone says he's a DiY promoter, then certain people can go: "Well, that's a lazy promoter", you know, "that's someone not doing it right".

Thus, the negative connotations of such a label were both undesirable and confining, the implication being that a number of bands would potentially refrain from booking their Glasgow gigs through Stuart. More broadly, DiY thus defined would restrict CP within a specific network of people. This tension created by the perceived lack of effectiveness of DiY promoters accelerated Stuart's conversion to an independent label and mode of practice. However, DiY and its ethic were getting across positive messages as well, according to Stuart:

> I think a lot of the selling point for the gigs is, you know, you're supporting the artists, and you're supporting the promoter in a way as well because you're making sure they don't lose money, you try to support what they do. I think that's an important thing with Cry Parrot, you're supporting a scene, you're caring about something.

Consequently:

> DiY is something that's formed upon ethics which are troublesome...but ultimately a positive thing. I think independent is perhaps the word...I guess for me it keeps a sense that I'm open-minded anyway and I'm trying to be doing my own thing in my own way perhaps. *I just want to be ethical.* I think I just struggle with defining (emphasis added).

In essence then, it was both the label *and* the ethics DiY embodied that were 'troublesome', as seen from the outside. But while the label would trigger negative responses, the ethics were perceived as positive by Stuart. His recognition of DiY's negative connotations exemplifies Mary Douglas's observation that labeling, as a form of classification, involves an increasing bias that leaves our assumptions unchallenged (2002 [1966]: 46). In this case, as I have also discussed in Chapter 3, the assumption was that DiY pertained to what we call 'leisure', a view that leaves the definition of professionalism, as well as the distinction between professionals and amateurs, intact. Therefore, DiY provided a 'discordant cue' that tended to be rejected based on established assumptions. If this ambiguity or discordance is accepted, Douglas says, then 'the structure of assumptions has to be modified' (ibid.: 45).

In the following chapter, I argue that DiY dwells in and feeds upon precisely such a profound semiotic indeterminacy that disturbs and begs the reconsideration of certain assumptions. The process of labeling is never ethically neutral, more so because it is not a matter of particular negative attributes conferring those labels. Rather, it is a social relationship between the attributes of a person, group, or entity and their incongruity with our assumptions or stereotypes that lead to stigmatization (Goffman 1963: 13).

As Stuart put it, the problem for outsiders was not 'laziness' *per se* (in itself a misapprehension as I have shown for 'disorganization' in Chapter 3), but the *stigma*, that is, the notion of laziness not fitting within the stereotype of a music promoter. Of course, stigmatization does not guarantee the ethical subjection of the stigmatized (Faubion 2011: 62), because it does not address the 'reverse' discourse, namely how the notion of the promoter fits within DiY (see Foucault 1978: 100-102). It seems to me that Stuart's engagement in the discourse about DiY and independent revolved around exactly this counter-possibility.

The adoption of independent seemed to represent a more suitable marketing technique, but also a more honest and accurate representation of CP practice because for Stuart, it reflected the fact that he was open to ideas outside of the DiY network:

> DiY promoters essentially adopt corporate or marketing techniques. That's so true, you know? Ultimately, branding is important, and promotion and scheduling and budgets and all these things, they all come into play and I think that's something I'm still trying to get a grasp on...But you know, you have to adopt some sort of model to get anywhere.

Adopting models from the 'professional' music world was not an objective in itself though, and Stuart was highly skeptical and critical of a number of corporate practices. For example, there was a fine line between exploiting corporate strategies to effectively promote events on the one hand, and endorsing corporate funding or sponsorship on the other. This was a line that Stuart did not want to cross and he was critical of other local, small-scale, young promoters who were prone to utilizing sponsorship from a well-

known energy drink brand for their club events. However, Stuart was realistic when reflecting upon his collaborations with, for example, the Glasgow Film Festival (GFF), and had no delusions about the government and corporate funding involved in these large-scale events.

The appropriation of corporate techniques such as branding seemed to play an important function, which stickers and badges served particularly well. But the CP logos that embellished these artefacts did not mean that Stuart fully embraced branding as a metasemiotic phenomenon or *logos* (Manning 2010: 46), that is, the organizational principles of commodity circulation. As Manning notes, the dissociation of brand from its product has resulted in the conflation of brand semiotics with semiosis (ibid.: 36), thus disrupting the link between the 'immaterial' brand and the materiality of the product.

Such a break effected by capitalist marketing further obscures the fact that acts of commodity branding historically have been quite common. Moreover, the historically shifting registers of authenticity associated with branding do not erase the underlying paradox that the act of marking products sought to resolve: that in all economies of scale individuals have had to live with impersonal objects, the homogeneity of which could not negotiate the complexity and heterogeneity of social relations (Wengrow 2008). Therefore, in a city saturated with promoters, Stuart's mobilization of branding should not be placed within a matrix of authenticity and corporatism. It should instead be seen as a means for Stuart to delineate his own space within a complex web of musical affiliations, and specifically to invest CP with his own identity or social role and express his ownership.[128]

Being caught between two registers had elicited a form of 'moral torment' (Robbins 2004). Stuart would constantly question many of his choices pertaining to the

[128] This vaguely recalls Caroline Humphrey's observations on the relation between Mongol nomads and horse-brands (1974: 485).

organization of shows, and he was reluctant to implement or introduce new elements from fear that his practice would fall outside the limits of DiY. For example, he had repeatedly wondered about whether employing a film projector would be consonant with DiY practice, which generally promoted an aesthetic of simplicity (Chapter 6). And, of course, taking money from the proceeds was taboo. As Robbins's ethnography demonstrates, ethical reasoning reflects neither Kant's autonomous rational subject freely choosing between categorical universals and knowing at any given moment what is the right or wrong course of action, nor is it, as Robbins further shows, exclusively attached to utilitarian motives or to unreflective cultural reproduction.

But contrary to the Urapmin, who found themselves in the midst of two conflicting and mutually exclusive ethical realms, for Stuart, in principle at least, there was no dilemma in the sense of being called to embrace one and renounce the other. It was rather a matter of scrutinizing the possibility of expanding an existing register (DiY) in order to encompass a wider set of ideas and practices, which he perceived necessary for the viability of the register itself. The fluid themiticality of the register would render any such dilemma ambiguous at best. Therefore, the criteria of its justification were to some degree performative thus retaining its ethical indeterminacy and escaping complete routinization. This did not preclude Stuart from engaging in ongoing critical thinking and participating in this ethical discourse. After all, practices and their discursive codings are rarely in accordance (Faubion 2011: 94). Criteria, though they might be used retrospectively to assess a decision, usually fail to provide answers to actors that find (or put) themselves into problematic situations (Caton 2010: 175).

Even in cases in which mutually agreed criteria fall short of elucidating the appropriate course of action, ethical judgements and their validity rarely depend upon subjective intuition or universal 'common sense' but are the products of intersubjective and representative thought (Arendt 2003: 141). And judgements, in the lack of a clear distinction between right and wrong and in the absence or inadequacy of general 'rules', hark back to positive or negative examples, as we have seen. 'The question arises',

writes Arendt, 'whether there is really nothing to hold onto when we are called upon to decide that this is right and this is wrong', and the answer is that we 'cannot hold on to anything general, but to some particular that has become an example' (Arendt 2003: 143). Insofar as actors have recourse to examples ethical judgements go beyond subjective opinion.

Stuart's reflections, as well as the tension between DiY and independent echo Hesmondhalgh's account of 'indie', a music genre which emerged out of the uneasy relationship between the challenges that punk posed to the music industry, and the more mainstream aspects of contemporary music business:

> In an era of pragmatic acceptance of collaboration with major capital, there is a need to (re)develop a case against the majors which does not rely on a simplistic romanticism. At the core of the post-punk independent [i.e. DiY] ethos was an important argument about *autonomy* (1999: 53).

A pragmatic response to changing economic logics, indie combined the desire of cultural producers to achieve success while at the same time working outside the dominant norms of the industry (Hesmondhalgh 1999: 52). The failure of a DiY *êthos* to create a system *outside* the dominant system is reflected by indie's very existence, which represents the merging of the contradictory drives of popularity and alterity (see Born 1993). The lack of control that corporate funding enforces does not necessarily result in aesthetic compromise though (Hesmondhalgh 1999: 55-57).

If the hallmark of the ethical discourse about DiY and independent is autonomy, radical self-determination and control, then from an ethical-pedagogical standpoint it is problematic (Laidlaw 2010a: 377). It is at strain with the ethical domain as such, which is always a domain of the intersubjective, and it questions the ethical character of projects that do not privilege autonomy (e.g. Mahmood 2005). Less of an ideal and more a normative part of the themitical dimension of a Western ethical apparatus, the imperative of autonomy cannot be disregarded but it must be qualified (Faubion 2011: 72, 75, 120-121, 159; see also Chapter 6). As Ferrara has argued (1998), although

'authenticity' presupposes autonomy, the latter is an *insufficient* condition to give rise to authentic conduct, while the 'subjective' capacity of 'grounding validity' is always a property of intersubjectively consituted subjects.

5.7 A Flurry of Activity

Not unlike other modern subjects, Stuart exhibited 'ethical complexity'. In striving through CP to occupy an ethical subject position pertinent to his musical interests and promotional practices, he had simultaneously become the occupant of another subject position, namely the one conditioned by his work for Nice'n'Sleazy. The simultaneous existence of these different positions had clearly affected Stuart. For example, a side-effect of his employment in Nice'n'Sleazy was his relative lack of time and energy to treat the bands as he used to:

> Whereas I still like doing that – don't get me wrong – I just can't do that all the time. I make sure I'm pleasant, it's just that I struggle to consistently treat them like a house guest, that's quite draining in a way when you're putting on so many gigs and so many bands...And it's across the board, but I think I make more effort in the Cry Parrot shows because it's more personal and I'm personally more into these bands, but I maybe don't have as much energy as I used to...It's not that I'm not excited by the gig and it's not that I don't think that they're nice people, it's just that I don't have as much energy to sit down and have a meal with them and take them around.

Organizing an average of eight gigs per month for Nice'n'Sleazy plus the regular club nights, was both hard work and emotionally draining for Stuart due to the interpersonal communication involved in the job. However, as I demonstrated above, this tension was gradually neutralized and the two subject positions began to overlap considerably. Converting from DiY to independent was a semiotic shift that designated the ethical transitions and refinements brought upon CP. I think it would be more correct to perceive these changes as Stuart's effort to enlarge the subject position he sought to occupy rather than move on to a different subject position altogether. Stuart's gradual shift attested to his desire to embed characteristics from independent promotion within an existing DiY register. From this perspective, his mode of subjectivation did not

contribute to the reproduction of the homeostatic characteristics of the DiY subject position to-be-occupied but mainly to its alteration and diversification. In questioning the taken-for-granted through ongoing problematization, Stuart adapted his conduct, and along with this, he effected changes on his subject position.

While CP progressively mutated to an independent promoter, Stuart's experience in DiY promotion had allowed him to work at Nice'n'Sleazy. Therefore, his initial position was a *necessary* condition for the occupation of the latter one, as well as for the subsequent expansion of his initial position's ethical scope, which, conversely, would be influenced by Stuart's work experience in both Nice'n'Sleazy and the CCA. In short, the scope, structure and priority of his ethical subject position(s) permits ut to understand how:

> Certain subject positions include or can include or permit the nesting within them of certain others...Certain subject positions might be the necessary or the sufficient condition of certain others to which they are nevertheless not equivalent. Certain subject positions are trans-institutional and others not. The demands of certain subject positions may override the demands of certain others. One might occupy a certain position night and day and another only on occasion. Subject positions are variably expansive. They have variable logical profiles. They bear variable ethical weight (Faubion 2011: 66).

Stuart's ethics takes on further complexity if we take into account his numerous collaborations both within CP and with other promoters, venues and organizations. Although the relations with his associates were assymetrical in the sense that Stuart was ultimately in command of the operations, at times, CP consisted of a subject position with multiple occupants in-becoming. This intrasubjective complexity was intensified by the accommodation of other subjects external to CP.

Stuart had formed a 'partnership' with the SWG3 Studio Warehouse, where he hosted monthly afterparties for the SWG3 gallery's exhibitions (Chapter 1). The partnership with SWG3 was not the only joint initiative that Stuart had begun. I briefly mentioned his collaboration with the GFF, for which CP organized events that emphasized a film/ music crossover. Moreover, cross-promotion and collaboration with other promoters

and venues was important and Stuart saw his involvement in such mutual efforts as strengthening the events by enabling him to bring different musical strands and diverse audiences together, as well as nurture established connections or initiate new ones. Finally, cross-promotion had the practical benefit of permitting Stuart to undertake projects of larger scale, such as the *Music is the Music Language* three-day festival he was initially planning for September 2011 along with Bryony from *Tracer Trails*.

Some of the touring bands Stuart booked, especially later on, signaled that CP had become a competitor within the local live music industry, which Graham's company had recognized by banning him from continuing his promotional alliance with Stuart. The ethical environment of CP also included younger actors under Stuart's pedagogical supervision. One example was *Crasier Frane* and another was *Red Room*, a young promoter who had sought advice from Stuart for setting up a one-day festival. Consequently, in his belief that the organizational aspects of live music promotion were essentially straightforward, his aim was to enhance their understanding and confidence in putting on their own events and convince them not to rely upon promoters who could potentially exploit them.

Therefore, Stuart's practice was beneficial for various music actors, and he had the foresight to understand that CP's long-term viability was correlated with the general well-being of the local music network. Providing advice to young bands and promoters was geared towards ensuring continuous creative stimulation in music practice. By attracting new crowds to his events and supporting young bands and promoters he could facilitate local music's growing potential through the establishment of links between different actors, thus supporting this prolific activity so as to not fade out over time.

5.8 A Sense of Togetherness

The first time I asked Stuart what had motivated him to engage in music promotion, he replied that it was to have 'fun' and put on gigs from bands *they* liked. Having 'fun' and

expressing 'their' personal musical taste as the main motivation behind CPs actions were complemented over time by 'wanting to put together something interesting and not purely wanting to make money...something that is all-encompassing but still affordable'. 'Interesting' and 'all-encompassing', as well as 'exciting' and 'stimulating' were terms which were often employed by Stuart to convey his ideas about CP events. This view was not new, but it had explicitly been put into practice towards the end of my fieldwork. Physical objects, visuals, a crossover with film and the arts, as well as the diversity of music promoted by CP represented the embodiment of this ideal. Stuart's collaboration with SWG3 and GFF attested to this and reflected what an all-encompassing event should entail.

This had also given rise to an idea of novelty and movement. In practical terms, it involved Stuart hosting CP events in different venues so as to avoid becoming formulaic. The idea of mobility also explains several developments or changes in CP's practice over the course of my fieldwork. In order to keep things 'interesting', CP had to evolve, to 'move forward'. Stuart entertained that:

> It would piss me off if Cry Parrot just felt stagnant, same level, and people. If you're continually putting on smaller bands you are generally getting the same people in every time, and there's no push forward. I think what I'm basically trying to do is extend, you know. I'm not really aiming towards a certain thing as such, it's not like I'm trying to get towards the next step and that's me putting on U2. It's purely to try and solidify, perfect what it's all about.

Therefore Stuart had identified a tension between DiY and *progress*, with the latter being one of the main values guiding Stuart's promotional practice. So whereas the temporality of DiY was resolutely immanent (Chapters 3), Stuart's conduct was informed by a more 'progressive' notion of time. It can be argued then, following Wilk (2007), that this tension represents not the competition but the coexistence of different lived temporalities and futures. Not only did Stuart's open-ended progress peculiarly resemble the temporal immanence and unpredictable futurity of DiY, but as I will demonstrate in the next chapter the latter's indeterminacy also invites contemporaneity of present and future through its ongoing process of becoming.

Stuart's notion of progress that engendered major as well as minor transformations of his promotional ethics were underpinned by a concern with quality: 'I think it was just that feeling of trying to polish things off and I just care more about the quality of the event now'. Better quality equaled well-made objects, diverse music, 'bigger' names on the bill and 'proper' venues, in addition to a 'fun' and welcoming atmosphere. Stuart's words exemplified the rationale behind the evolution and change evident in CP practice over time and his objective was to create a feeling of a 'gathering' or a 'party'. He believed that music events should be based upon mutual trust between promoters, musicians and audiences (see also Chapter 3), whereas the event as a whole should aim to foster *a sense of togetherness*.

I still remember his expression of disapproval and surprise when somebody stole my bottle of wine at the WSP thirteen-band all-nighter at the Audio Lounge studio in Maryhill, where Stuart was DJing. He said: 'Who would do such a thing?'. Note that this specific event had attracted around 300 people. Stuart was not being naive but articulating his strong belief, stemming from his experience, that people attending similar events shared a more-or-less similar *êthos* or that, at least, they were conscious of the 'sense of togetherness' advocated by the DiY network and thus respectful towards it. Perhaps, a similar feeling of intimacy was the reason for my inattentive behaviour in the first place.

The fact that Stuart was striving to induce a sense of togetherness in his events as the *telos* of his subjectivation confirms Foucault's idea that 'the self' is not pre-given but has to be created (1997: 262). Actors are not born ethical subjects (Faubion 2011: 4). Insofar as different actors strive to occupy the same position, individual idiosyncrasies and the modes of subjectivation are integral to an anthropology of ethics that wishes to trace the variable trajectories and limits of subject positions and not merely their themitical reproduction.

Faubion argues that once actors securely occupy their positions, ethical practices become dispositional, a part of the *habitus* (2011: 37; see also Mahmood 2005: 136). The accumulation of such dispositional capacities does not necessarily imply that the end of subjectivation – the occupancy of a subject position as the actor's ethical *telos* – equals to the consummation of a project (Faubion 2011: 42-43). Stuart was not confined by the subject position for which he was recruited and he implemented various changes as a result of his *askêseis*. But even if he reached his *telos*, even if CP became the exemplification of inclusivity and intimacy it would not be the end of the line:

> I guess people can rely on it [*Cry Parrot*], they continue turning up, people are stimulated by the events and the network has expanded...That's what I want and I want to keep it exciting all the same though. I think that's the big thing, I just want to keep it fresh. If you keep it fresh and keep it dynamic, you know, if it's something that's moving like a dynamic entity, to me that brings more people on board because they're excited by that thing.

Such a view resists complete routinization, the process of transforming ethical value to themitical normativity. Routinization reduces ethical complexity. Yet routinization is not the *telos* of ethics but its retraction and the partial capture of ethical value by normative schemata and recurring practices. This explains both the tendency for the emergence of countercurrents of increasing ethical complexity and the historical and cultural variation of ethics (Faubion 2011: 114-115).[129] Still, according to Stuart's words above, small increases in complexity do not preclude the possibility of extending the ethical chrism (and the subject position as such), despite the fact that the process of ethical valuation, of designating who is the subject of ethical regard, is inherent to routinization.

5.9 Generosity

When Foucault speaks of ethical substance, the part of oneself targeted for ethical *askêsis* and review, he does not necessarily mean one's body. Carnal pleasures [*aphrodisia*] in classical Greek thought did not designate (Christian) flesh or sexual acts

[129] Faubion seeks to avoid the trap of relativism through his engagement with Niklas Luhmann's systems theory (Faubion 2011: 9-10; see also Robbins 2012).

as such, but instead referred to one's relation to, and the texture of, one's ethical experience of sexual pleasure and desire (1985: 43, 1997: 263-264). Although sexual acts were surrounded by a certain amount of suspicion and anxiety (ibid. 1985: 117), *aphrodisia* as an object of ethical concern should be perceived as ethically neutral, 'neither as irredeemably evil nor as always already and incorruptibly good' (Faubion 2011: 39). '[W]hen a philosopher was in love with a boy', says Foucault, '[t]he problem was: Does he touch the boy or not? That's the ethical substance' (1997: 264).

In reformulating Foucault's question, I would like to suggest that the problem for Stuart, his ethical substance, can be phrased as follows: does he keep the proceeds or not? Does he give it all away or not? Of course, one obvious difference is that this problem, as opposed to the philosopher's predicament, admits of various degrees. But Stuart's ethical substance, what can be best referred to as 'generosity', has all the characteristics of malleability and neutrality that make it an appropriate candidate for the target of *askêsis* in bringing about Stuart's ethical *telos* (cf. Faubion 2011: 55; Lambek 2010a: 20). Generosity demanded ethical work. Hence the hallmark of Stuart's mode of subjectivation: how to *limit* his generosity that was seen as detrimental to his long-term engagement with music. It was one or another *chrêsis* or 'use' (Foucault 1985: 53-62) that encompassed Stuart's subjectivation: the use of money or, simply put, financial management as an ethically-valorized practice and not merely as a calculated functional strategy.[130]

While generosity (or its absence) is usually manifested as personal disposition, it belongs to the themitical dimensions of systems, in this case specifically to the DiY mode of conduct. The regulation of *chrêsis* is not handed down as a set of rules but such moderation is predicated upon a *savoir-faire* on the part of the subject, a practice mediated through particular attitudes, themselves acquired through specific *askêseis* (Foucault 1985: 62). Stuart never conceded that he perceived or kept the proceeds from

[130] According to Lambek, it is 'the balance between prodigality and meanness' that characterizes generosity, while knowing how to choose 'the judicious middle path between two opposing extremes' is indicative of *phronêsis* (2010a: 20).

his promotional transactions as personal income or profit. It was evident though that the sharp differences between his early and later practice were inextricably linked to a changing use of money. I would argue that the reason for such a shift was twofold: it related to Stuart's experience of working in the local art and music industry, and second to the financial deficit that certain CP gigs had incurred. These reasons were interrelated as they both provided a lens into the economy of live music promotion and questioned CP's long-term viability.

Stuart's unpaid internship at the CCA was a case in point. The six-month post involved basic administrative tasks. However, this basic organization also extended to corporate networking events, which according to Stuart attracted substantial funds for the CCA. Although his internship did not have a specific focus, towards the end of his tenure he was asked to produce the Centre's music programme. Stuart eventually refused, on the basis of this task being 'a proper, full-time, paid job', which he would be keen to undertake if he was properly employed by the organization. As he explained to me:

> They realized that I was there and I could maybe help them with the music programme but, ultimately, I can't really do a music programme for free anymore, just because it's time more than anything. If it was still a hobby I would maybe consider doing bits and pieces, but the fact that you get paid for doing one venue and then you don't get paid for doing the other, to me, seems a wee bit unfair.

Therefore, receiving a wage from Nice'n'Sleazy enhanced his conviction that the effort and time invested in music programming and promotion had to be financially rewarded. A common feature of both CCA and Nice'n'Sleazy was that they provided Stuart with an opportunity to deal with more commercial aspects of the art and music world. This experience was not an overtly positive one: the CCA internship afforded him some insight into arts funding, which, amidst a global financial crisis, Stuart believed that was 'crumbling apart', feeling that pursuing a career in the creative industries by following a publicly funded route was a risky affair. On the other hand, he became convinced that organizations in need of external funding tended to lose their focus on creative matters due to their overt orientation towards attracting necessary funds for their projects.

Stuart's converted approach regarding CP finances was also partly owed to the losses he had made over the years. In general, he claimed that music promotion was not a profitable venture and he would cite as examples the names of local commercial promoters who had decided to quit. Regarding the idea of keeping money from gigs to cover his earlier losses, Stuart mentioned that: 'Some people would say: "Oh why are you [keeping money]?". I don't think it's a bad thing, making money back that you've lost in a gig'.

As mentioned above, Stuart did this with the most successful CP gigs and with fundraising events, while he would forward these amounts to future projects, memorabilia and equipment – in different kinds of 'investments', as he used to call them. But the rhetorical question he one posed to me, and to which I had no answer, revealed Stuart's intentions about the future of CP: 'Why not take a wage if it consistently becomes something that is so busy all the time and acts are being paid really well?'.

5.10 The Ethics of Identity

Stuart's mode of ethical subjectivation was largely constituted, informed and consolidated by specific principles, attitudes and gestures towards financial resources. The ways in which a promoter operated at a business level were essentially acts of ascription to and selection of a subject position. Working through the ethical conundrums and risks of particular *chrêseis* necessitated considerable and diverse *askêseis*, because seemingly trivial changes in routinized practices immediately signaled and were perceived as a shift of identity and ethical positioning. This acutely demonstrates not only the strength and the extent of one of the themitical dimensions of the DiY ethical position, but also how close a link could be drawn between DiY and money at a basic functional level, in the sense of how lack of resources engendered and sustained particular approaches to music-making, such as the practice of sharing (Chapter 3).

The ethical framework put forward in this chapter affords some further remarks that transcend the realm of music practice. First, I hope to have shown that ethics is an intersubjective and pedagogical process of autopoiesis and that exercising freedom is fundamentally a matter of personal inclination and conscious choice as much as it is historically, socially and culturally conditioned. I have demonstrated that the ethical and the themitical are not mutually exclusive but rather intimately related and co-contributors to the subject's ethical formation. Stuart's (everyone's?) ethical practice gives empirical credence to the idea that the ethical and themitical dimensions of autopoietic systems interpenetrate and affect one another. Otherwise, ethics would only be the outcome of a moment of crisis or 'moral breakdown' (Faubion 2011: 86).

Zigon's (2007) postulation of ethics as a fleeting event followed by the 'return to the *status quo ante*' (Laidlaw 2009: 436), disregards Foucault's conceptualization of ethics as a process not isolated from moral precepts and as one's continuous relationship with oneself (Foucault 1997: 263). This requires ongoing problematization ('thought'), which does not invite momentary decisions, but historically alludes to an open-ended process and thus to the subject's capacity to change itself and take different forms (ibid.: 117-119, 256, 290-291, 318; see also Laidlaw 2002: 324). Problematization is not only one's reflection upon a problem, but 'what establishes the relation with oneself and with others and constitutes the human being as ethical subject' (Foucault 1997: 200).

Stuart's ethical *telos* cannot be perceived as the consummation of a project. It would be more precise to say that the 'project' comprised the consistent and continuous problematization and molding of his subject position interspersed with periods when the tendency towards routinization was stronger. Ethically speaking, this points towards the fluctuating degrees of self-determination that subjects have at their disposal and the alternating and mutually reinforcing nature of the ethical and the themitical. If at times Stuart's *askêseis* took the form of ethical reasoning in relation to what was or was not appropriate from a DiY standpoint, then carving ethical routes incongruous with such a perspective confirms Faubion's view, following Laidlaw (2002) and Nietzsche (1998

[1887]) before him, whereby ethics does not and should not necessarily refer to something positive, 'good' or 'right' (Faubion 2011: 61-62). Confining ethics to a particular value system and a specific contrast between 'good' and 'evil' assumes the ascription of a specific meaning to ethics (or 'morality') as such (Laidlaw 2002: 318) and the fixing of a 'positive' or 'ethical' content to ethical subjectivation.

Precisely because Faubion's anthropology of ethics does not focus on the individual but on subjects passing through, occupying and changing (changeable) positions, these subjects could be of various kinds. Would it be possible to claim that Stuart was something other than a Western everyman, an individual, a person (Dumont 1986; Geertz 1983a; La Fontaine 1985; Mauss 1985)? As Faubion remarks:

> Like the typical human being, the ethical subject, even when only an individual human being, is thus already always of intersubjective, social and cultural tissue...Its I is always also other (2011: 120).

In this respect, the process of ethical subjectivation cannot be determined *a priori* as a process of individuation. Despite his focus on inclusivity and 'togetherness', the pedagogical and intersubjective mode of his subjectivation, the occasional collective nature of CP and the fact that as a promoter Stuart had inherited and disseminated a pluralistic ethics, the claim that he constituted a relational subject seems far-fetched. I would refrain from arguing this, contrary to what I have claimed about *Divorce* (Chapter 4), mainly due to the sense of individual ownership and control that Stuart sought to retain on CP throughout.

I would be equally reluctant though to contend that Stuart was an individualistic individual, regardless of how themitically strong such a calling is in our society. This brings me to a final point that concerns 'identity'. Stuart once told me that that CP was ultimately his identity with music. Ethically-marked identity cannot be reduced to what is usually referred to as 'status' or 'role' (nor to some combination of these) due to its ethical indeterminacy (Faubion 2011: 101-104). As such, an anthropology of ethics

should start from and be grounded in ethical practices, but the unroutinized nature of ethical value precludes the identification of an ethical subject with the contingency of his or her practice. Ethics envelops *praxis* and *poiêsis* but is also present in sheer *being*, because 'the ethical subject does and must engage in poiesis even in merely being an ethical subject' (Faubion 2011: 102). Identity conveys 'a dimension of practice and the organization of practice' that is irreducible to normative demands (ibid.: 13). Therefore, as Stuart's statement above shows, identity is better conceived of as being intimately related to one's subject position (ibid.: 104; see also Robbins 2012). However, this should remain an ethnographic question.

Part III

Towards a DiY Êthos

Chapter 6: Do-it-Yourself

6.1 The Ethical Bricoleur

In Part II I described the set of distinct but related ways in which my informants sought to become ethical subjects, that is, to fashion ethical selves through music practice. The considerable variety of technologies of the self that subjects historically and cross-culturally have had at their disposal has enabled me to examine an array of musical and extra-musical practices and their interrelationships as essentially practices which people had chosen in order to make themselves the subjects they wished to become. This variety must be qualified, however. Not *all* practices revolving around music are techniques of self-formation, character-building and transformation. Not all practices foster a specific *êthos*. Not all practices seek to do so or accomplish this in different contexts, nor do all subjects undergo the process of autopoiesis, nor are they able to pursue an ethical life: for the ancient Greeks, a slave – to others or to one's appetites or desires – has no ethics (Chapter 5). He or she lacks the capacity, that is, the *freedom* to determine themself and become an ethical subject.

What, then, was particularly 'ethical' about the techniques that my informants employed? Was there something that bound these disparate practices into an ethically coherent whole? I believe that what emerges from the preceding chapters as the salient feature of my informants' ethical subjectivation is their differentiated relationship with DiY, and specifically with a DiY *êthos*. Whether it was perceived as something to be cherished, embraced, expanded or avoided, the ethical resonance of music practices I observed during my fieldwork exhibited more than a contingent relationship to DiY. What compelled me to ethically frame ordinary music practices in the first place was the intrinsic ethical dimension of DiY in both practical and discursive terms. DiY *purported* to be ethical and *was* ethical by virtue of its partially negative identity conferred by its professed opposition to practices that were considered 'unethical'. Therefore, my informants had preceded me in framing music as an inherently ethical

practice and discourse. And a DiY *êthos*, variably articulated, recognized and practiced, was central to this.

Consequently, this chapter should begin with the most basic question: what is DiY? The answer stumbles upon a seemingly unsurpassable obstacle: DiY has been historically deployed to describe a broad range of practices, and as a result to convey diverse meanings. Its use in popular discourse emerged in association with home-improvement projects in the 1930s and, especially in Britain, during the postwar period a 'Do-it-Yourself' approach to home improvements was flourishing (see also Luvaas 2012: 8-10).[131] The need to rebuild the country after the war meant that DiY initially sprung out of necessity, in the absence of the financial means of many working- and lower-middle-class households to hire the services of professionals (Oram 2003: 179).

Concurrent developments in popular culture culminated in the proliferation of skiffle, a popular music genre that had its roots in black and white folk music and in Britain evolved from the British jazz revival (see Dewe 1998). By employing a DiY approach, skiffle musicians utilized homemade instruments and the genre became hugely popular in the country by paving the way for the subsequent emergence of other music genres (see Frith *et al* 2013). Nevertheless, it was not until the advent of punk and post-punk in the late 1970s and early 1980s that DiY's meaning as an *êthos* was firmly established (see e.g. O'Hara 1995; Reynolds 2005; Savage 1991).

An anti-consumerist and collaborative *êthos* that propagated active participation and the democratization of culture through equal access to the means of its production was of course not particular to punk. For example the international arts and crafts movement born in Victorian England during the 1850s (e.g. Blakesley 2006), and the production of 'zines', initially foreshadowed by science fiction fanzines in 1930s U.S. (see Duncombe 1997), were predicated upon similar values and ideas. A set of DiY-oriented aspirations

[131] Relevant publications of the period were read widely. The magazine *Do it Yourself* first circulated in 1957.

were also attached, at least discursively, to the so-called 'rave' scene in the UK in the late 1980s and 1990s. The media-generated moral panic surrounding raves at the end of 1980s focused upon what was seen a dangerous, decadent, drug-fueled cultural form, which ended up being banned by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in 1994.

Apart from the extraordinary fact that a law made a mention of a specific type of popular music, the 1994 Act was targeting far more than this and it imposed constraints on various forms of grassroots oppositional activity, such as squatters and New Age travelers. Not only did the Act backfire and result in the intensification of these and other activities but the political climate of the preceding period had also given rise to additional forms of cultural and political expression. Therefore, under the umbrella of 'DiY culture' (McKay 1996, 1998) an array of practices and events came together, such as free festivals, ecological activism, anti-road movements and self-publishing.[132] The following decades, DiY culture saw an ever increasing diversification of this activity and an even broader use of the term DiY. Nowadays 'Do-it-Yourself' is a ubiquitous motto employed to designate practices ranging from music and the arts to knitting and making cupcakes. One even encounters DiY employers, accountants and PR agents (Duncombe 1997: 188-189; Luvaas 2012: 5-6).

From this unavoidably partial overview three things immediately emerge: first, DiY has been a historical phenomenon. Second, a DiY approach is not exclusive to music but belongs to a much broader terrain. The second point anticipates the third, namely that even *within* music there is profound disagreement and confusion as to what constitutes DiY practice. The existence of relevant historical antecedents obscures rather than clarifies, because there has been no consistent pattern for subsequent practitioners to follow. Consequently, the loose threads that constitute the fabric of the historical relationship between music and DiY may still be taken as a blueprint, but one that is always accompanied by a certain eclecticism. Indeed this seems to be the only way of

[132] See, for example, Atkinson (2006), Holtzman *et al* (2007), Spencer (2005) and The Trapese Collective (2007).

attempting to make sense of the meaning of the term while living up to the 'standards' delineated by previous, similar operations. This attempt is further undermined by the sheer variety of practices and multiplicity of domains that have appropriated the term, each in turn endowing it with additional meanings. Thus, DiY presents the same problem that we encountered in relation to the concept of 'scenes' (Chapter 2), namely that it is a vernacular term loaded with diverse meanings that has been introduced in academic discourse. How can we unproblematically accept, for example, that a DiY accountant and an anti-road protester present the same values?

We do not have to search outside of anthropology to find an answer to this question. The notion of the *bricoleur* conjures up an image of the DiY practitioner that seems applicable in virtually all the instances described above (and many more). Making do with 'whatever is at hand' has always been the fulcrum of DiY practice. In a practical sense, then, 'Do-it-Yourself' can be perceived as a form of *bricolage*, that is a patchwork constructed from a limited amount of material resources and not defined in terms of a project but by its potential *use* (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 17-18; see also Luvaas 2012: 110-111, 122-123).

The figure of the *bricoleur* is certainly insufficient to account for the political character of DiY movements or the ethical potential of DiY practice, both of which have invested the term with plural meanings. But what if the *bricoleur* is indeed a singular figure across the realm of DiY practice, contrary to what we might initially think? What kinds of answers can we come up with if we rephrase the initial question and instead of asking what DiY *is*, we ask what DiY practitioners *do*? After all, the history of DiY is a history of practices rather than things. Even when the term is followed by a noun and not a gerund, it implies a crystallization of activity. That is, that objects are embodiments of skillful activities.

DiY involves making things yourself instead of consuming ready-made ones (Duncombe 1997: 7; Holtzman *et al* 2007: 44). This means that the necessary skills for

any DiY activity must be *acquired*. I would like to argue that the acquisition of skill does not precede but is intrinsic to DiY practice and emerges in the process of engagement with specific activities. By following Ingold's insights (2000), I perceive DiY not as a set of practical rules or a design to be subsequently handed out to passive followers, but rather as a skilled practice in and of itself. People make things, such as building houses, cooking food, or weaving baskets. All these are forms of making. What if, as Ingold suggests, we reverse this and perceive making as a form of *weaving*? Whereas making highlights the production of an object – the consummation of a project – weaving aptly demonstrates the processual nature of skilled activity and the gradual emergence of material form, which is always embedded in and the outcome of the whole field of relations between practitioners, their tools and materials, as well as the environment in which they are situated.

If, as I want to argue, DiY can be best described as an emergent skilled practice, then how can we account for its ethical resonance? The leap from practical skills to ethics seems huge. However, this is not the case (Widlok 2004). As Francesca Bray notes: 'Everyday ethical behaviour can be viewed as a form of skilled practice, one that always mobilizes social and symbolic resources and that frequently also deploys material, technical skills and instruments' (2013: 180). Everything that applies to skilled practice could also be invoked or 'borrowed' in order to examine DiY as ethical practice. In the same way that skills are learned and acquired *in-the-weaving*, individuals become ethical subjects through cultivating and conditioning themselves within complex intersubjective environments. Thus, instead of the external imposition and individual enactment of ethical rules, DiY encapsulates and exemplifies a form of ethics that is contingent upon the total field of relations in which the subject is enmeshed.

It is for this reason that the notion of 'DiY culture' is problematic, because the connotations of 'culture' convey an *a priori* consensus which is constraining and which obscures rather than illuminates the fact that the array of ethical activities under the DiY rubric are grounded in the very process of *doing it.* Now, if playing music can be

seen as an ethical practice, this is also because the plenitude that it brings is internal to the practice (MacIntyre 1981); people do it for pleasure and in order to excel in their playing. However, there are also goods that are external to music-making for which different actors compete, such as being paid for performing or gaining fame and prestige (Bourdieu 1993). In retaining the inherent pleasures of music-making, my conviction is that DiY represents a nexus where both internal and external goods meet.

If the emergence of material forms and ethical subjects is the result of repetitive, rhythmic movements and habitual practices, the consolidation of DiY practice through music-making in the city also requires its rhythm (Lefebvre 2004). In building upon my discussion in Chapter 3, and by employing Finnegan's concept of pathways (1989) I will demonstrate that DiY music-making as a form of weaving is a distinctive urban practice and that its regularity across a series of cross-cutting urban pathways enables subjects to exercise their right to the city (Lefebvre 1996, 2003). For Lefebvre, the right to urban life is enacted in the *use* of the city by its inhabitants and in the appropriation of spaces.

Similarly, Ingold remarks that *use* is the process by which forms are produced, and it should be seen as a creative 'process of environmentally situated and perceptually engaged activity' (2000: 354). This is equally true for the *bricoleur*, whose means are defined not in terms of a project but in terms of their use in ever changing circumstances. More specifically, due to the scarcity of his or her resources at hand the *bricoleur*'s decision about where to place an element in a construction will dramatically affect the structure of the emerging form (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 19). By changing the form the *bricoleur* changes both the system and himself or herself, because the form and the *bricoleur* are integral parts of the system of relations that gives rise to the former. Thus, changing the city means changing ourselves: the right to the city, I repeat, is an *ethical* right. Therefore, by highlighting the inadequacy of the term 'local' to capture the generative and relational aspects of locality, I rely on urban musical pathways in order to address the specificity of the city as an emanating form of ethical life (Lambek 2011).

It follows that the creative practice of the *bricoleur* involves improvisation (Hallam & Ingold 2007), which develops into a form of cultural production (DiY) that reflects and affects a form of dwelling (urban living), as well as ethical forms (ethical subjects). In the *bricoleur*'s universe, these three forms are interrelated within a system that 'grows' from within. In working through fragments, the *bricoleur* creates something novel out of the old (Ingold 2000: 371). The synergy of humans and materials in any skilled practice calls attention to the constellations of diverse relations that are also involved in the carving out of ethical trajectories. I address this matter by arguing, following Laidlaw (2010b), that although ethical subjectivation requires a distributed notion of agency and personhood, the fact that intentionality is seen as the defining characteristic of agency is problematic, while a causal web of relationships between different actors fails to account for the assignment of responsibility. Because of this, the idea of freedom is more conducive to our understanding of ethics (Foucault 1997; Laidlaw 2002).

This is a pressing issue and more so due to the connotations of resistance and opposition implied in the term agency which confines all practice within a structure/agency dualism and disregards that, far from oscillating between the two, certain ethical practices signal its dissolution (e.g. Mahmood 2005). As I have shown in Part II, my informants did not resist local norms and established music practices but actively attempted to inhabit them, albeit on their own terms. In doing so, they did not engage in a form of political activism or resistance as it has been argued for 'DiY culture' (McKay 1996, 1998; see also Gartside 1997; Halfacree 1999). Their 'politics' was not predicated upon an elaborate articulation of social and political aspirations; it was a 'politics by example' (Duncombe 1997). In other words, it was defined not by its specific content, but by an evolving *form*. And as Walter Benjamin has argued, progressive cultural politics depends not on *what* you do, but *how* you do it (1970 [1934]).

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DiY is a paradox. It is used in a striking variety of contexts, yet no single definition is able to capture this pluralism; and I have attempted to outline here the reasons why it should not. In the remainder of this chapter, I break down 'Do-it-Yourself' into its constituent parts and examine them in turn.[133] I start from the middle in an attempt to define what 'it' is or what is meant by 'it'. I draw on the views of several of my informants in order to highlight that even within a fairly small and well-connected network of individuals engaging in similar music practices, consensus on the meaning of the term is impossible to attain. This leads me to the conclusion that the semiotic meaninglessness of the term as well as its omnipresence reflect what has been called a *floating signifier* (Lévi-Strauss 1987 [1950]), but that its value lies in what the term *does* rather than what it explains. Next, I offer a detailed analysis of 'doing' in DiY and explore its potential as a skilled urban practice. I contend that the evacuation of the term's propositional force is balanced by the ways in which DiY practices endow it with ethical meaning. The conviction that DiY is still meaningful is reinforced in the final section where I examine its relational nature. I find 'yourself' to be out of step with practices on the ground which point towards a reconsideration of Western forms of individualism and of conventional notions of 'politics'.

6.2 To 'DiY' for: Doing for What?

It was not only Stuart who seemed perplexed by the content of the term. In fact, one could argue the opposite, namely that his conscious ethical conditioning was predicated upon the continuous problematization, realization and, ultimately, renunciation of certain aspects of a DiY *êthos*. By contrast, it is the puzzlement and contradictions arising from the claims and practices of WSP and *Divorce* that forcefully demonstrate the difficulties in delineating a set of prescriptions that typified a DiY approach to music-making.

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[133] 'Do-it-Yourself' appears in different forms in the literature (e.g. DiY, DIY, D.I.Y.). This seems to convey little more than personal preference, something which underscores DiY's fluidity and shows that an examination of its meaning should begin with the term itself.

In Chapter 3 I indicated that, strictly speaking, WSP lacked a well-defined agenda that directed their conduct. The collective's self-professed 'disorganization', and the apparently piecemeal attempts in articulating a clear and concise framework testified to what seemed to my uninitiated eyes an open-ended and precarious enterprise. Of course, their ideas and practices were constantly challenged, negotiated and sharpened through experience. Moreover, these were linked to a set of notions relating to a virtuous *modus operandi*, as well as to judgements about music's inclusiveness and accessibility.

WSP perceived the DiY *êthos* mainly as the means to claim and retain control of their music. Keeping control and operating as a non-profit unit were seen as interdependent but the latter's association with DiY was far from clear-cut. Whereas non-profit was ostensibly easier to grasp,[134] the *term* DiY had been the object of constant negotiation, appropriation or rejection. Colin believed that it was a source of confusion for everyone involved and that its *êthos*, which conveyed a communal venture, literally contradicted 'Do-it-*Yourself*'. Rather, the term functioned as a signifier that affiliated WSP with like-minded music practitioners and simultaneously distanced them from others. Hence the correlation between DiY and non-profit as an index of the collective's approach, according to Iain:

> With DiY you know that we'll not make money off it. That's what I would get if I saw it somewhere. We're just non-profit. I think it would probably be better to say non-profit all the time, because I don't know whether people that say they are DiY are actually non-profit.

DiY then did not represent an accurate or truthful description of non-profit activities but an ill-defined term and a potent signifier, a guarantee of ethical conduct and a practical guide that enabled WSP to navigate the complex map of the local music industry. Yet the appealing simplicity of DiY facilitated and established connections between like-minded individuals. Embracing a DiY *êthos* was furthermore explicitly geared towards accumulating necessary knowledge through hands-on training and experience.

[134] However, charging a fee for events or even covering costs by taking money off the proceeds could be considered 'unethical' for part of the DiY cohort (see Chapter 5).

Consequently, empowerment and self-sufficiency were cherished and, therefore, WSP believed that it was especially important for younger bands, who could thus circumvent intermediaries (WSP included). What is more, music *per se* was privileged over a shared DiY *êthos*, which was desirable but still inadequate as Peter explained:

> You don't want to be putting on bands just because they've got the same ethics as you...If you're not into the music what's the actual aim of doing that?

Nevertheless, a kindred mentality beyond music was indeed crucial, evident in the collective's numerous contacts with GSA students and graduates. WSP held the opinion that artists had a nuanced understanding and superior hands-on experience of DiY practice due to the nature of their craft.

It was not exclusively 'noisy' bands that subscribed to a DiY *êthos*. For example, various bands on the WSP roster were musically quite distinct from, say, *Divorce*, who advocated a harsh and abrasive sound (Chapter 4). Thus, there was no direct correspondence between a specific sound and a DiY *êthos* locally. Nevertheless, according to Lucy, noisy bands *were* in fact related by way of a close link between DiY and a particular practice:

> For people that want to make noisy music, a DiY approach to things is more conducive because it doesn't require a lot of pomp and circumstance and external bullshit. You need your amps, you need some cables and some pedals, and an instrument. That's pretty much it.

But that was exactly *not* it, as we have seen: the effort, care, planning, hope, disappointment, dedication, collaboration, frustration, competence, problematization, negotiation, and ongoing practice that engendered and sustained this apparent simplicity were integral elements of a DiY approach. Lucy's comment is telling of the fact that this complexity could be underplayed and taken for granted by my informants. Having become dispositional, part of the *habitus*, these ethical practices, oddly enough, projected a musical aesthetic of simplicity. Indeed, understating the complexity of DiY practice is itself a linguistic mark related to the floating nature of the term (see below).

Although DiY as a *modus operandi* was appealing to the band, consensus was lacking with regards to its specificity and whether the band could or – echoing Stuart – *should* actually be identified with it. The modality of DiY, which along with WSP the band collectively seemed to acknowledge, was that it enabled musicians to maintain creative control and the rights over their music. In the absence of a blueprint and in the face of financial uncertainty and shifting band dynamics, how this sense of control was interpreted, sought for and achieved varied greatly among individual members. The band detested the 'pay-to-play' policy and Alistair had made that crystal clear when he publicized such an offer (Figure 6.1), followed by derogatory statements about 'pay-to-play' promoters and a declaration that the band would *never* play such a show.


[redacted] to me show details 13:58 (9 hours ago) Reply

On behalf of King Tut's Wah Wah Hut I would like to offer Divorce a slot on the bill of Thursday 11th November 2010

The show will supporting touring band Demon Hunter.

Face value of tickets will be £9.00 we must receive £5.50 from each ticket sold.

If accepted you please make sure:-
You do NOT play any show in Glasgow at least 4 weeks either side of date above.
You do NOT have any members under the age of 18 years old. (Unless show is over 14s)
You pick your tickets up within 5 days of being notified that they are ready for collection.
You arrange backline share with the other bands on the bill as backline including drum kit will not provided.

The show will not be confirmed until these stipulations are agreed and we have received contact a telephone number.

Best

[redacted]
E: [redacted]@dfconcerts.co.uk
T: +44 [redacted]
M: +44 [redacted]

www.tinthepark.com | www.gigsincotland.com | www.kingtuts.co.uk | www.theedgefestival.com

Figure 6.1: The 'pay-to-play' offer as it was made public by Divorce.[135]

Alistair entertained, however, that the band's *êthos* could not be challenged or tainted by playing larger shows. This was important as it demonstrated an aspiration, akin to Stuart's yearning, to transcend the stereotype according to which DiY bands should remain fairly local and unknown. Contrary to this conventional view, Alistair perceived

[135] Retrieved from http://i763.photobucket.com/albums/xx275/andybrowntown/Tuttut.jpg [Accessed 15 February 2011].

their *êthos* as having the capacity to inform the band's *future* decisions and actions, thus assigning to it a much broader scope. He maintained that 'Do-it-Yourself' was more critical than music *per se*, because engagement with the former embodied an ethical apprenticeship not merely enclosed within the acquisition of musical skills. Having participated in other bands for years, Alistair was well aware that a DiY approach could be translated in *Divorce* receiving full credit for whatever successes but also the responsibility for any potential failures. Creative 'autonomy' came at a cost. This ethical stance notwithstanding, there were also utilitarian and realistic overtones, according to Lucy:

> It depends on what you're trying to adhere to, and that's why I don't think that [DiY] is particularly trying to spread a message to people. It would be cool if it was but I don't think it is, because it doesn't work all the time, and I would have to say for everybody...It depends, for example, on how big an audience you want to play and where you want to play.

Although DiY safeguarded the band's ethical integrity, Lucy was not convinced that such an *êthos* could present a pragmatic alternative to the current status of the music industry, and, most importantly, that there was no *intention* of broadcasting itself as such. After all, receiving support from people outside the DiY network was unavoidable, if anything due to the scarcity of venues and other material resources. Consequently, Lucy was particularly reluctant in classifying the band's practice as 'DiY'.

Ruth, on the other hand, found the term simply meaningless. Having said that, she perceived that the *êthos* reflected by the term was important. For Ruth, DiY had been made redundant and steadily followed the path of the term independent, which from its initial conception as *independence* from corporate interests had ended up a label ('indie') for musicians essentially operating under the thumb of major record companies (see Hesmondhalgh 1999). Subsequently, the rhetoric of independence became the hallmark of the DiY *label.* DiY was uncritically used as an umbrella term and, just as 'indie', it went from signifying something specific to conveying pretty much anything,

which, as Ruth believed, was a sign that soon it would mean nothing or something totally different from what it was initially intended. In its decreasing intelligibility, DiY had replaced independent with the former being merely a new word for the expression of old meanings.

Common knowledge dictated that the chances of signing a record deal with a major label that would not jeopardize or compromise the band's *êthos* were slight, but on the other hand DiY record labels exhibited a shortage of financial resources due to their small-scale, self-funded nature. 'Money is only ever there to pay for something, rather than pay people', as Anna put it. In light of this, DiY epitomized a non-economic model that could still sustain music practice and its pleasurable qualities, while, for Anna, money-making could be seen as the *denial* of this process, harking back to a tension between creativity and commerce (Cohen 1991). However, the rest of *Divorce* did not share such a perspective – quite the opposite.

The nexus between DiY and money was seen as a legitimate aspiration, an unavoidable matter-of-fact or a necessary evil. For example, Ruth noted that money unavoidably emerges as an issue the more successful a band becomes and also highlighted that earning a living through music could not be written off as 'unethical'. Problems could surface though if music-making was exclusively determined by financial aspiration.

Lucy on the other hand, although happy in principle to make money from her music, nevertheless doubted whether she could actually do it had she been confronted with this hypothetical scenario. But as she remarked, even in the current state of affairs, music-making was not immune to financial pressures: 'You don't want to think about the money aspect but, let's face it, it's there...You just want to know that you're going to break even'. If the possibility of earning a substantial income, desirable or otherwise, was highly unlikely for the band, *Divorce* members still recognized the fact that 'Do-it-Yourself' was *free-for-all*.

So what did 'the rest' think then? Although space limitations do not allow me to examine their views in detail and attend to their equally important thoughts on the matter, what follows should reinforce the idea that DiY exhibited a kind of semantic *omnipotentiality*.

For example, Robert who had released some of his music through WSP as *Japanese War Effort* acknowledged that DiY was essentially a learning process but he found the term increasingly 'fashionable' and was reluctant to identify with its *êthos*. Jamie from *Gay Against You* (GAY) highlighted the connection between DiY and local arts, as did Alex from *Ultimate Thrush* (Chapters 3 & 4), who clearly distinguished between the collegial dimensions of DiY and what he perceived as business-like practices. Helen, who taught at the GSA, pointed out that, for a number of individuals, DiY represented a stepping stone and the initial part of a process towards career progression, while Michael from *Errors*, who shared a rehearsal space with Colin's band (*Gummy Stumps*), believed that DiY was a positive and stimulating introduction to the music industry when compared with potential exploitation by major labels. However, he did find DiY somewhat 'exclusive and cliquish'. Gerard (Chapters 1 & 3) endorsed this view by adding that DiY did and should have a much broader resonance outside music.

By contrast, Ray from *Open School* who had presented at the Transmission event (Chapter 3), reckoned that the term was devoid of political meaning. Jamie's friend, Barry (Chapters 3 & 5), identified a necessary tension or contradiction in the practices of individuals involved in DiY music-making whose self-reliance included a 'corporate' aspect. I had observed two such examples during my fieldwork: Chris from *Nuts and Seeds*, whose band *Dananananaykroyd* [*sic*] had released material on non-DiY labels; and Graham from *Cry Parrot* who was subsequently employed by a local commercial promoter (Chapter 5).

The self-doubt and certain internal criticism were complemented and reinforced by external accusations and criticisms leveled at the DiY network *tout court*. I was told that

'professional' promoters had expressed the view that the DiY cohort were 'cliquey', 'lazy' and 'disorganized' (Chapters 3 & 5). This was why Graham from *Cry Parrot* had once argued with members of a well-known promotions company (ironically, the ones who subsequently employed him). I should stress here that, despite these negative connotations, not everyone outside the DiY network looked down on the ways in which my informants approached music-making; nor, conversely, did the latter single-handedly dismiss the practice of non-DiY promoters.

A good example was *Synergy Concerts*, which had been described to me as a 'crossover', while Eileen, who managed *Synergy*, held the view that DiY was the bedrock of any healthy music scene and she regularly booked bands from the DiY cohort to perform at her gigs, including *Divorce* and GAY among others. Donald, who used to organize music events for the local music magazine *Is This Music?* was sympathetic towards the DiY cohort regardless of his conviction that such a grassroots enterprise was emphatically amateur (cf. Chapter 3) and that the exclusive focus upon paying musicians was essentially achieving nothing more than 'turning capitalism on its head'.[136]

But not all grassroots music was considered DiY any more than DiY signaled exclusively grassroots operations. A DiY *êthos* lodged an ethical texture and a conscious *poietic* affinity in one's relationship with music, oneself and others. The question that emerges though about 'Do-it-Yourself' is 'to do *what*?'. 'It' could be endowed with any meaning and because of this, as Ruth pointed out, the term had become meaningless. The contradictions and dilemmas associated with it attested to the fact that an unproblematic application of DiY was impossible. To different degrees this was evident in the views and practices of WSP, CP and *Divorce*, but it was also amplified by the diversity of opinion among additional music actors. Would it be incorrect to suggest that DiY did not exist?

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[136] On DiY as the flip side of capitalism, see Duncombe (1997) and Luvaas (2012, 2013).

6.3 The Floating Nature of DiY

To return to my initial question: what is DiY? And a second: if DiY potentially means anything and nothing, why do people resort to it in order to describe their music practices? Here, I will deal with the first question. I would like to argue that the meaninglessness of DiY derives from the very attempt to define it as an abstraction by separating it from the context of action. Although the term appears to accumulate semantic value in opposition to its 'others' (e.g. professionalism), it would be wrong to conclude that DiY is pure negation, defined in contrast to social conventions. Rather, as I have argued in this thesis, DiY essentially rested upon a plural relationship with its 'others', while due to its strong focus on practice its definition was fundamentally positive. Because DiY relies upon practical action, its analytical bankruptcy becomes evident only when it is approached as a signifier of abstracted modalities of action.

Considering the multiple and diverse ethnographic manifestations of the term, the variable and conflicting views of my informants, as well as the fact that DiY as a meaning-bearing unit exhibits historically the potential of carrying any meaning, we seem to be dealing with an instance of a *floating signifier* (Lévi-Strauss 1987 [1950]). Lévi-Strauss employs *mana* as an example of the floating signifier, which is an acoustic image without a fixed concept. He argues that the difference between *mana* and similar types of notions in Western societies is not one of a kind but of the degree to which these belong respectively to an official interpretive apparatus (the Western parallel would be 'science') and a more fluid and informal system of communication. If the term DiY seems derivative, this does not mean that the notion encapsulated by the term can be reduced to its diverse manifestations or that it is far removed from *mana*. Rather, in all cases, types of notions such as DiY, *mana*, or ethical charisma (Chapter 5):

> [O]ccur to represent an indeterminate value of signification, in itself devoid of meaning and thus susceptible of receiving any meaning at all; their sole function is to fill a gap between the signifier and the signified, or more exactly, to signal the fact that...a relationship of non-equivalence becomes established between signifier and signified, to the detriment of the prior complementary relationship...There is

> always a non-equivalence or "inadequation" between the two, a non-fit and overspill...this generates a signifier-surfeit relative to the signifieds to which it can be fitted. So, in man's effort to understand the world, he always disposes of a surplus of signification (Lévi-Strauss 1987 [1950]: 55-56, 62).

This 'surplus of signification' also explains why Lucy's explanation above appeared to be simplistic. Because of this 'inadequation' and because 'the signifier precedes and determines the signified' (ibid.: 37), more specifically because DiY and similar notions mediate between the unperceived totality of meaning (signifier) and referential reality or knowledge (signified), the floating signifier 'is the disability of all finite thought' and incorporates primarily 'the conscious expression of a *semantic function*, whose role is to enable symbolic thinking to operate despite the contradiction inherent in it' (ibid.: 63).[137] As such, Lévi-Strauss continues, the floating signifier is:

> [A] *zero symbolic value*, that is, a sign marking the necessity of a supplementary symbolic content over and above that which the signified already contains, which can be any value at all, provided it is still part of the available reserve (ibid.: 64).[138]

DiY as a floating signifier, in its pure, semiotic state, is an indeterminate value of signification. In its semiotic resemblance – not ethical equivalence – to ethical value or charisma, it largely remains unroutinized and beyond substantive articulation (see Faubion 2011: 95-97). But as Faubion warns us, the identification of the floating signifier with the value of signification itself should be approached with caution. Specifically, the semiotic importance of ethical value as a floating signifier cannot be equated with significance in an ethical sense, anymore than the semiotics of DiY can be

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[137] According to Mehlman (1972: 23-24), Lévi-Strauss subverts Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified into a second Saussurean dichotomy, namely between *langue* and *parole*. This is due to the Saussurean 'arbitrariness' of the sign constituted by the 'unmotivated' relationship between signifier and signified having eclipsed in Lévi-Strauss's formulation. However, Mehlman argues, the non-equivalence or 'inadequation' between signifier and signified embodied by *mana* indicates precisely this arbitrary nature of the sign entering the level of *langue/parole*, where the possibility of communication coexists with its potential paralysis at the moment which language is transformed into speech. After all, with *mana* as a floating signifier Lévi-Strauss returns to the Saussurean signifier, albeit one without a definitive signified.

[138] Lévi-Strauss's conception of the floating signifier follows linguists Jakobson and Lotz, who perceive the 'zero-phoneme' as that which 'is opposed to all other French phonemes by the absence of any distinctive features and of any constant sound characteristic. On the other hand, the zero-phoneme...is opposed to the absence of any phoneme' (1949: 155).

seen to convey its predominance in practice. Thus, if we are to account for the analogy of the semantic function of DiY and how it precedes, determines and encompasses a constellation of variegated practices, then this would not lay in the term's lexical value or propositional content, but in its *illocutionary force* (Austin 1962), that is, in what it 'does' rather than what it 'explains'. As Bloch (1989) has argued, once the propositional force of language decreases, its illocutionary force may increase precisely due to linguistic ambiguity, in which case meaning cannot be separated from its context of production.

Therefore, the 'meaning' or essence of DiY cannot be perceived outside practice but rather it is intrinsic to action. How to do 'it' is not given but is generated in the process of *doing*. Lévi-Strauss seems to agree when he suggests that we should not 'seek the origin of the notion of *mana* in an order of realities different from the relationships that it helps to construct' (1987 [1950]: 56). But whereas his statement refers to semiotic relationships, the notion of DiY alludes to *ethical* relationships grounded in real action. As such, DiY constitutes a specific *register*, that is 'a mode that brings certain experiential fields "into resonance"' (van de Port 2004: 11). These experiential fields are 'incontestable', in the sense that they conjure up an image beyond discursive reason: they are 'as undeniable as they are unspeakable' (ibid.: 14). Although the semiotic indeterminacy of DiY hinders its 'discursivity', it should be clear by now that as a register DiY was far from 'undeniable', at least among my informants.

This points to the second way in which DiY clearly diverges from the extraordinariness and ineffability of the floating signifier in its association with the 'sacred' (Durkheim 2001 [1912]: 35-41; see Faubion 2011: 95-96). The lack of sacredness, however, does not deprive DiY from its 'authenticity' (see Conclusion), but it does call for its embeddedness within a notion of everyday life as opposed to a transcendental essence. If the absence of its capacity to enchant means that DiY, in all its profanity and secularity, cannot be termed a floating signifier after all, so be it. But it seems, to me, that we do not have to fall back on a sanctified notion in order to semiotically account

for its fundamentally liminal nature; nor does this warrants us to discount it simply as an ill-defined motto that happens to be in vogue.

Besides, DiY refers to a mode of ethical becoming and being in the world and, therefore, it is worth reminding that the ambiguous experiential nature of the processes of ethical conditioning it incites inhibits us from reducing it to a semiotic phenomenon. It is rather a phenomenon of which its opacity and atmospheric qualities are not merely semiotic but surround ethnographically observable practices (see Faubion 2011: 96-97). It is this meaning in-the-making to which I now turn in an attempt to illuminate the importance of DiY as an ethical, urban practice. If DiY verges on meaninglessness, then why do people employ it to describe their conduct? How can we conceptualize DiY as a form of urban practice and what are the ethical attributes of such a practice, its implications for urban life and the ways in which people experience the city? Finally, can DiY enrich our understanding of how music actors become ethical subjects?

6.4 Locating Ethics

As noted in Chapter 2, Finnegan shows an acute awareness of the shifting boundaries of the locality, but 'the local' is nevertheless employed throughout her study unproblematically, although she argues that:

> It would be misleading to envisage musical worlds and musical activities as fully contained within Milton Keynes itself. But of course no town in Britain is *only* local...Musical activities outside the area were also important for those who travelled outside Milton Keynes or came to the area for the first time, given the existence of accepted musical models more or less shared throughout the country (1989: 183-184).

Finnegan acknowledges the fact that the city was neither of direct concern to individuals and groups involved in music-making nor were their musical pursuits framed by its boundaries (wherever these might lie). Finnegan's insights seem to hold for WSP who had moved in Glasgow from Stirlingshire, for those members of *Divorce* who came to the city from different places and for different purposes, as well as for Stuart who

commuted from Motherwell. All three, as well as the DiY cohort at large had established connections with 'like-minded' actors in other places around the country and beyond.[139]

Thus, DiY music-making in Glasgow engaged people and places that were far from 'local'. 'Locality' itself as a self-contained geographical space or an analytical tool for the description of urban life is ambiguous at best, because it assumes an embeddedness in space and time which conceals the fact that cities are in a constant state of flux. Most importantly, it obscures the generative aspects of 'the local' not as a spatialized metaphor or event, but as a relational (Appadurai 1995), performed (Coleman & Collins 2006) and ethical practice (Lambek 2011). As Appadurai notes, anthropologists 'have taken locality as a ground not figure, recognizing neither its fragility nor its ethos *as a property of social life*' (1995: 207).

One of my main objectives in this thesis has been to account for the shared but tacit practical and ethical knowledge that *localizes* music-making and its practitioners. This involved contextualizing the relationship between urban space and the temporality of music practice, as well as the processes of articulation of local meanings through an ethnographic examination of explicit practices *vis-à-vis* the broader historical, social, economic and political contexts in which these take place.

Instead of an overarching framework for the social-scientific study of music or a conceptual pastiche consisting of an 'eclectic array' of ideas (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 32), I suggest that we should rather embrace the residual, porous and in between nature of social life as *the* definitive characteristic of music-making: 'What would it mean', Biehl and Locke ask, 'to consistently embrace this unfinishedness, seeking ways to analyze the general, the structural, and the processual while maintaining an acute awareness of the inevitable incompleteness of our theories?' (2010: 320). Such an indeterminate and

[139] For example, in December 2010 *Eternal Fags* (Chapter 3) played a successful gig in Murcia, Spain, while Stuart already had proposals to curate events abroad, and he did so shortly after I finished my fieldwork, at the Made festival in Umeå, Sweden.

elusive state of affairs will not necessarily fail to address fluctuating, shifting and transforming realities. By contrast, it will embed ethnographic analysis *alongside* such transitions, temporalities and anticipations. Finnegan exhibits a certain uneasiness at the elusiveness of 'the local', which is part of the reason for her elaboration of the concept of 'pathways' that I have employed throughout. It seems to me that pathways best capture these ideas in relation to DiY practice. It is worth quoting her at length:

> These "pathways"...avoid the misleading overtones of concreteness, stability, boundedness and comprehensiveness..."Pathways" also reminds us the part-time nature of much local music-making...of the overlapping and intersecting nature of different musical traditions and of the purposive and dynamic nature of established musical practices...These pathways did more than provide the established routines of musical practice which people could choose to follow: they also had symbolic depth. One common impression given by very many participants was their musical pathways were of high value among the various paths within their lives...These...were established, already trodden and, for the most part, abiding routes which many people had taken and were taking in company with others. To be sure, none were permanent in the sense of being changeless, nor could they survive without people treading and constantly re-forming them; new paths were hewn out, some to become established, others to fade or be only faintly followed, others again to be extended and developed...These pathways included both personal networks and established groups, and were another way in which local musical "worlds" were realized in practice. From the point of view of both individual participants and the localities through which they ran, they constituted one set of purposive actions – an invisible structure – actions through which people chose to conduct their lives (1989: 305-307).

What the idea of pathways captures so well is that music, as I have already argued, had first and foremost an important *value* in people's lives. However this value was defined and realized it yielded an ongoing, propulsive negotiation of the conventions of music practice not through innovative actions or a series of breaks with entrenched norms and 'traditions' but through an improvisational creativity that dwells in becoming (Hallam & Ingold 2007). For Deleuze, '[h]istory amounts only to the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to "become", that is, to create something new' (1995: 171). These preconditions cannot account for all the 'constellations through which life chances are foreclosed' or anticipate 'the ways desires can break open alternative pathways' (Biehl & Locke 2010: 318). Echoing this in their analysis on creativity and improvisation Hallam and Ingold write that conventions:

> [C]an provide general guidelines or rules of thumb whose very power lies in their vagueness or non-specificity. The gap between these non-specific guidelines and the specific conditions of a world that is never the same from one moment to the next not only opens up a space for improvisation, but also demands it (Hallam & Ingold 2007: 2).

Therefore, musical pathways as life trajectories are neither predetermined nor teleological in the sense of having clear and predefined goals and aims, but generative. As outcomes of improvisation, pathways are also relational and temporal. I argued in Chapter 3 and 4 that following conventions involves not so much replication but their continuous and often unconscious alignment to fit the circumstances of subjects who take part in mutual self-becoming. It is this *rhythmical* adjustment that invokes the temporality of pathways, predicated upon repetition and alteration as actors go along. Therefore, the rhythmically orchestrated relation between repetition and difference calls for a cyclical conception of time or, more accurately, an alliance between the linear and the cyclical, space and time, returning and becoming (Lefebvre 2004).

Pathways have their history, not as *pastness*, but one that is always in-the-making. They are trodden but cannot be mapped: 'There is no script for social and cultural life. People have to work it out as they go along. In a word, they have to *improvise*' (Hallam & Ingold 2007: 1). If anything, pathways exemplify the idea of music-making as social practice and process. As people adapt pathways and, in turn, become attuned to them, anthropology should continually adjust itself to fleeting circumstances and to the imagining of alternative futures: 'By dwelling *in the meantime* of individual lives and social worlds', and by '[g]rasping subjectivity as becoming – rather than structural dependence', anthropology has the ability to anticipate and shed light upon emergent forms of living, to 'invoke neglected human potentials and to expand the limits of understanding and imagination – a people yet to come' (Biehl & Locke 2010: 336-337).

This immanence of life correlates with perceptions of time and action in DiY (Chapter 3), which McKay defines as 'a culture of immediacy' (1998: 13). Its focus on action and 'the excitement of the moment' risks losing sight of relevant historical trajectories, as

well as future potentials (Chapter 5). However, DiY means a *shortage* of time and 'that is why there is an obsession with the collective present. There can be no long term strategy when there is no long term' (Jordan cited in McKay 1998: 13). In other words, DiY practice essentially serves to bring the future into the present and, contrary to a teleological conception of progress (Chapter 5), its ongoing evolvement is embedded within DiY's very nature (see below).

My informants' urban pathways, in all their messiness, idiosyncrasies and spatio-temporal dimensions, were concrete, grounded realizations of a DiY *êthos*. Indeed, the characteristics of complexity, malleability and persistence of pathways, the possibility for innovation as well as the fact that people passing through them contributed to their renewal, enlargement and continuity, point to their correspondence with ethical subject positions. In the same way that musical pathways tangibly enact processes of subjectivation and facilitate the becoming of ethical subjects, they also constitute a series of active routes towards localization and the production of 'reliably local subjects' (Appadurai 1995: 206).

In his article about locality as a form of ethical life, Lambek remarks that the only way to grasp the 'soul' of a place, to account for the *there* there, is to shift our focus 'from a consideration of abstract space or stationary objects to one of realized moral action...to the liveliness of human activity...to the acts of inhabiting place' (2011: 206). In essence, then, the effort to account for 'local knowledge' (Geertz 1983b) is a process of accounting for the matrices of acts of habitation. Urban musical pathways represent a series of routes upon which such acts unfold. As spatio-temporal sedimentations of ethical practices pathways *produce and constitute* 'the local' as an assortment of activities with their own intrinsic temporalities embedded across space.

Thinking about the local in terms of activities pertinent to habitation also allows us to reclaim the particularity of the local. In Chapter 3, I considered the ways in which participation in DiY music practice and the appropriation of spaces largely articulated

the collective's urban existence. I further argued that the rhythmical nature of music practices necessitated an appropriation of time that was integral to music-making; and that such temporal appropriation is inherently good when the activity in question brings plenitude and is in harmony with itself. For Lambek, such activities represent a way of thinking about the local 'with respect to the goods internal to a set of practices, such that activity and context are conjoined' (2011: 209).

But as these acts do not occur in a vacuum, they demand and strive to accomplish the mutual recognition that is necessary to inhabiting the locality. Therefore, I argued that the recognition of one's right *to inhabit* upholds an ethical right: the right to carve out an ethical life. For Lefebvre:

> The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the *oeuvre*, to participation and *appropriation* (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city (1996: 173-174).

More than this, exercising the right to inhabit simultaneously engenders localization, not as a passive process whereby subjects learn to produce and reproduce local knowledge 'by virtue of its local teleology and ethos', that is, *for itself* (Appadurai 1995: 206). Rather, localization occurs through the perpetual interaction and reciprocal relationship between active self-making and practices that effect urban change. As David Harvey notes:

> The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right...The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (2008: 23).

By 'sculpting space' and 'by giving themselves rhythms' (Lefebvre 1996: 105) along urban pathways, my informants foregrounded and enacted their right to the city. In doing so, they sought to carve an ethical self or, more precisely, to *weave* one.

6.5 DiY as Weaving?

DiY lacked a definition *a priori*. Considering the close-knit relations between local music practitioners the absence of consensus might initially seem odd. However, even in societies and groups that are considered 'traditional' it is not consensus but dissensus that forms the basis of cultural communication and the former is achieved through specific practices, performances and 'rituals' (Appadurai 2004; Fernandez 1965, 1986). Helen, who, as a local academic, active participant and researcher in grassroots art and music, had a fairly well-informed view on DiY practice noted that, for all the diverse conceptualizations of the term, there *was* consensus that DiY was a 'good path to follow'.[140]

Therefore, the pathways associated with DiY were 'good', but their evolving nature positively precluded the delineation of specific definitions and criteria. Gerard, a long-standing participant in local music, reiterated this conviction when he told me that: 'There comes a point where DiY stops being your own alternative and becomes the right way to do it'. This is where, I believe, we can search for an answer to the semiotic meaninglessness of the term as well as its ethical importance. What seemed to provide a sense of coherence to an otherwise fluid and porous group was the significance of the affinity between practical ways of making music and the ethical ways of actively following (or rejecting) specific musical pathways. Music practice *per se* had emerged as the object of ethical discourse and action. Nevertheless, DiY was not so much a *modus operandi* but represented the ethical modalities that infused a kaleidoscopic array of practices, and not only music. For Gerard this is certainly true: 'It's basically how I see the world'. DiY was a dimension of ethical practice as such.

A DiY *êthos* presents a mode of ethical conduct that is not teleological. In other words, DiY is not the means to an end; the means *is* the *telos*. I alluded to this in Chapter 3

[140] At the time of my fieldwork Helen also taught a relevant course at the GSA with the title 'Do It Yourself: Art/Music/Publishing'.

('sharing'), as well as above in my discussion about how to approach the local. More specifically, music practices pertinent to a DiY *êthos* can be seen as inherently good. MacIntyre distances himself from an Aristotelian conception of ethical practice in the abstract and distinguishes between internal and external goods in *practices* (1981: 187-191, 196-197). For example, receiving money, status or prestige through playing music are goods external to the practice and largely the result of particular circumstances. After all, one could acquire these goods by engaging in various other activities. Therefore, it is only when the goods cannot be achieved through other activities that they can be called goods internal to the practice in question. It follows that virtues should be understood with respect to activities that enable subjects to achieve these internal goods, that is, in relation to practices in which means and ends are conjoined.[141]

As Lambek explains, 'a practice is ethical insofar as the goal is not instrumental but reaching for excellence within the particular practice' (2010a: 21). Lambek thinks that music is an evident example of this and that many people play for the pleasure of it and not for financial rewards, but he also argues that the distinction between internal and external goods is not absolute or always easy to discern. Any given practice may be in turn linked to other practices and their respective goods, internal or external (ibid.: 21-22). In fact, DiY music-making could be perceived as the nexus at which internal and external goods meet: where ethics, musical enjoyment and pleasure converge with the provision for necessary resources (in order for the practice to continue), publicity and even prestige; where 'creativity and commerce' are not necessarily antithetical (Cohen 1991), but mutually constitutive (Weinstein 1999).

Therefore, in abolishing this distinction, the very constitution of what comes to be perceived as 'good' (and, according to Gerard, right) emerges and is gradually accomplished in DiY practice. Criteria of ethical conduct are not always pre-existent but

[141] MacIntyre reserves the term 'practice' only for those activities the exercise of which realizes the goods internal to them, but he notes that virtues are not exclusively exercised through practices.

are generated and formed in practice. According to Widlok: 'The constitution and definition of human goods is an open process and evolves as any other skill and as human life itself evolves' (2004: 60). Certainly, my informants followed already trodden pathways and emulated ethical exemplars, but their routines did not reduce ethical practice to rule-abiding behaviour or the application of norms. Rather, and to echo Colin's words (Chapter 3), the value of a DiY *êthos* was shaped and honed by the very process of *doing* it.

To clarify what is at stake, a useful analogy can be made with Tim Ingold's anthropology of skill, in which skilled making does not merely involve 'technical execution'; design and construction are intertwined (2000: 289). After all, skill is not only involved in making tangible objects, but personal and social identities (ibid.: 290). It follows that the distinction between ethical practice as a form of doing or *praxis* and the production of objects as making or *poiêsis* cannot be sustained (Faubion 2001a: 93-94, 2011: 102).

As I showed in the previous chapter *askêseis* are technologies of self-making. Therefore, making objects and selves can be perceived as skilled practices. Normally, technical knowledge (e.g. making knots) cannot be handed down as a prior set of rules and representations, but is generated during its practical application (Ingold 2000: 358). Similarly, the knowledge about how to do things ethically is acquired in the process of responding to everyday circumstances and of making ethical decisions pertinent to the pursuit of the good (Widlok 2004: 59).

In both cases, making can be seen as a form of *weaving*: the process by which both technical and ethical practitioners perfect their skills through patterns and adjustments of rhythmic 'movement' in the production of objects and ethical selves respectively (see Ingold 2000: 290).[142] In both cases, the *form* that is produced emerges in the rhythmic

[142] This is reminiscent of Stuart's attempt to try to 'solidify' and 'perfect' his practice, not as his ethical *telos*, but as a continuous movement and an ongoing dynamic process (Chapter 5).

repetition of the weaving movement and the gradual unfolding of the relationship between the practitioner and his subject matter (Ingold 2000: 342).[143]

In a manner analogous to how the form of the object is brought into being through skilled, rhythmic movements, the repetitive nature of DiY music practice across overlapping urban pathways produces ethical subjects. This is not to deny that both practitioners have an idea of what they want to make or become. And as Widlok remarks, while ethics entails striving for a good that may never be fully realized, skilled practice aims to complete and achieve certain goals (2004: 60).[144]

This also imposes a distinction between internal and external goods in practices. If DiY represents a link between the two, then how do we overcome this problem? This is precisely the issue with the notion of making, particularly in that it 'defines an activity purely in terms of its capacity to yield a certain object', which is precisely the opposite of what weaving brings to the foreground: 'To emphasize making is to regard the object as the expression of an idea; to emphasize weaving is to regard it as the embodiment of a rhythmic movement' (Ingold 2000: 346).

The above considered, WSP's inability to come up with a DiY blueprint or a package of rules to be presented at the Transmission event (Chapter 3) should be recast and seen against *any* design's insufficiency to capture the processual dimension of skilled practice or to determine the form of material objects, ethical subjects and even living organisms (Ingold 2000: 344-345). Once DiY is perceived as weaving, 'design' becomes irrelevant. Rather, as baskets take shape within a field of forces at the interface between weaver and material in an environment, subjects emanate from intersubjective practices taking place in ethical environments (Faubion 2011). As such, (ethical) skills are properties, not of individuals, but of *the total field of relations in which they are*

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[143] It is important to note that, for Foucault, the self is not a 'substance' but a 'form' (1997: 290-291).

[144] Furthermore, techniques of the self do not necessarily require a material apparatus and are often linked to instruction (Foucault 1997: 277).

situated (Ingold 2000: 353, emphasis added). Not only does this dissolve the distinction between designers and practitioners/followers but it points towards a more distributed notion of ethics, agency and personhood. In what follows, then, I look at the ways in which 'Do-it-*Yourself*' encapsulates a particular but problematic notion of agency and discuss whether this has implications for the anthropological study of ethics.

6.6 The Ethics of Freedom

Anthropologists have taken up Foucault's ideas about power, domination and knowledge with particular enthusiasm. But as Laidlaw has argued (2002; see also Faubion 2001a), Foucault's writings on ethics and freedom, which had been neglected until recently, open up a way to describe ethical freedom ethnographically and to account for its diverse, historically constituted forms.[145] While Foucault is best known for his preoccupation with power relations, he nevertheless contends that these:

> [A]re possible only insofar as the subjects are free...if there are relations of power in every social field, this is because there is freedom everywhere...The idea that power is a system of domination that controls everything and leaves no room for freedom cannot be attributed to me (1997: 292-293).

As Laidlaw puts it, 'among anti-Foucauldians, Foucault was the original, and in many ways the best' (2002: 322). In his call for an anthropology of ethics, Laidlaw asserts that such an engagement 'will only be possible...if we take seriously, as something requiring ethnographic description, the possibilities of human freedom' (ibid.: 315). According to Foucault, 'freedom is the ontological condition of ethics', while 'ethics, is the conscious [*réfléchie*] practice of freedom' and 'the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection' (1997: 284).[146] Foucault's idea of freedom is *not* predicated

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[145] See also Chapter 2. Lambek (2010a: 25-28), Robbins (2007: 294-295) and Zigon (2007: 137; 2008: 42-45) acknowledge the importance of ethical freedom but their approaches differ, among other things, in the degree to which freedom is central to ethics and morality.

[146] According to Faubion (2011: 36-37), the translation of *réfléchi(e)* as 'conscious' rather than 'considered' or 'reflexive' is better suited to express the idea that, over time, ethical practices become dispositional and, as such, 'unconscious' to a certain extent (without this meaning that there is no space for creative intervention). Therefore, contrary to other translations of the term, 'conscious' registers this transition and addresses ethical practice in its entirety.

upon achieving but exercising it, and is neither rooted in reasoned self-interest or agency, nor situated outside power relations:

> [Foucault] persistently distance[s] himself from two utopian ideas about freedom (ideas which, being utopian, often lead in practice to the opposite of freedom): the idea that to act freely is to act in conformity with reason (or one's "true" interests - this is the idea that lurks behind much anthropological use of "agency"), and the idea that freedom is only possible in the total absence of constraint or relations of power (Laidlaw 2002: 323).

According to Lambek (2010a: 25), Foucault's idea of freedom aims to transcend the Kantian dichotomy between reason and grounded experience, while eschewing a conception of ethics as radical self-determination. Following Faubion (2011), I argued in the previous chapter that, while Foucault's conception of ethics is not 'subjectivist', he emphasizes the subject's capacity to bring about an ethical self as opposed to follow norms. However, I further noted that, for Foucault, the freedom of becoming the person one wishes to be is historically and culturally limited (1997: 291), while the care of the self and one's relationship with oneself are not processes detached from prescriptions (Chapters 4 & 5). For Foucault, this is freedom indeed and, moreover, the *only* kind of freedom (Laidlaw 2002: 323). Foucault's freedom is one predicated upon interaction; not subjectivity but intersubjectivity. It is 'the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others' that 'constitutes the very stuff [*matière*] of ethics', as part of a broader concept of 'governmentality' that refers to 'the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other' (1997: 300).

If the conscious practice of freedom is partially dependent upon or related to the total field of relations in which the ethical subject is situated, then, to some extent, ethical self-fashioning will yield benefits for the whole group that partake (one way or another) in any given practice. This reflects a crucial difference between external and internal goods (MacIntyre 1981: 190-191), namely that the former benefit individuals to the detriment of others, while the latter have positive effects for the whole field of practice. But from the perspective of 'technical' skill, this field involves practitioners, materials

and the environment in which they find themselves; it includes both humans and non-humans.

Continuing the analogy from the previous section, is it not the case that musical pathways as ethical trajectories bring together an array of subjects and objects, spaces, ideas and forces? Would it be wrong to argue that the cross-cutting DiY musical pathways are distinct forms of urban assemblages and that their 'eventful' nature depends upon the synergy of humans and machines, urban and virtual spaces (Tironi 2010; see also Chapter 3)? Or that 'ethical materials' such as musical (or writing) instruments (Chapter 4), may have indelible physiological and ethical effects on musicians, to the extent that we can speak of instruments having a 'social life' (Bates 2012)?[147] Or, finally, that other 'objects' such as promotional materials determine and facilitate ethical subjectivation (Chapter 5)? After all, Foucault himself would contend that subjects are produced by and remain embedded within complex entanglements of forces and forms (1970).

Furthermore, it has been argued that, for all their profound differences, both Foucault and Latour's respective works challenge the idea of autonomous intentionality and they do so in different but complementary ways (Pyyhtinen & Tamminen 2011). Similarly, Ingold notes that intentionality does not belong to, or pre-exist in, 'the user and the used' but it is instead 'immanent in the activity itself, in the gestural synergy of human being, tool and raw material' (2000: 352). In all three cases, human and/or material forms are composed by and produced as relational compounds.[148] If intentionality is, to different degrees, a property of actor-networks, apparatuses or skilled activities, does it

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[147] This should not be conflated with the approach delineated by Arjun Appadurai on commodities (1986). 'There is a difference between musical instruments being incidental to, or constitutive of, social interaction' (Bates 2012: 372).

[148] This relationality is not a closed universe. For Ingold, skilled practices are embedded in and affected by an environment, while for Foucault (1978) and Latour (2005) action is enveloped by *life* and *plasma* respectively (Pyyhtinen & Tamminen 2011: 145). What we see is part of this 'outside' taking specific form in relational entities (e.g. power relations and networks). Semiotically, it is the relationship between the floating signifier and its signifieds, which always fail to express its wholeness but nevertheless emanate from it. It also corresponds with the relationship between unroutinized ethical value and themitical normativity (Faubion 2011).

follow that we should embrace posthumanism – or *a*humanism (Pyyhtinen & Tamminen 2011) – as an inherent characteristic of ethics?

I believe the answer should begin with the recognition that reducing agency and action to intentionality misses the point. I alluded to this in Chapter 4 with regards to the affective body, although in Chapter 2 I relied heavily upon the notion of agency to navigate through an array of concepts that seemed to be placed along a continuum with structure at one end and agency at the other. One of the problems with 'agency' is its ubiquity within the social sciences, resulting in the concept assuming a variety of meanings. Laidlaw (2010b) identifies two major conceptualizations of agency that currently pervade anthropological analysis: one that is associated with 'practice theory' and a less influential second version developed in relation to Actor-Network Theory (ANT). According to Laidlaw, both present issues and limitations.

One issue with the former view of agency is that it is firmly and consistently in opposition to larger structures and, as such, it is only rendered visible or valuable in actions that aim to resist, subvert or transform existing structures. Its structural significance indicates that 'as an index of freedom, the concept of agency is pre-emptively selective' (ibid.: 2002: 315). There is thus a discrepancy between lived reality – how subjects strive to realize an ethical self – and how, in principle, that is in *theory*, this ethical self ought to be realized. As I described in Part II, my informants critiqued but neither resisted nor wholly rejected relevant prescriptions; rather, they demonstrated an active desire to inhabit certain norms, structures and configurations which agentival action is supposedly geared towards resisting. A further issue with this conception of agency is its exclusive focus upon individual subjectivity and intentionality. Yet such a view of agency:

> [S]muggles rather specific values into a concept of the individual's efficaciousness, imagines this to consist of a creative force deriving from the interior of the human individual, postulates a zero-sum relationship between this and socio-cultural structures, and finds moral as well as analytical virtue in discovering where the former prevails over the latter (Laidlaw 2010b: 145).

On the other hand, Laidlaw continues, ANT's premise that everybody and every-thing potentially play an independent role in a causal chain of events disregards the assignment of responsibility, which is always present in real life and inseparable from the causality of events, but cannot be explained solely in causal terms. In other words, what is intentional is the interpretation of events and actions and thus the ascription of agency to specific actors.

Similarly, in everyday life there is nothing objective or natural in judgements about, and attributions of, intentionality and 'moral responsibility' to agents, animate or inanimate, something that we do constantly (Laidlaw 2010b: 146-147). It emerges that causality, intentionality and responsibility are intrinsically but variably related, and their attribution is so deeply rooted in our everyday routines that we should try really hard *not* to recognize in inanimate objects the kinds of intentions that ascribe responsibility (as ANT theorists do in order to underscore causality). For example, it was Ruth's voice that had *decided* she could not properly sing at the three consecutive Glasgow gigs (Chapter 4).

In turning away from subjective intentionality or causality as the hallmark of agency to responsibility, Laidlaw draws upon Bernard Williams (1993, 1995) to demonstrate that agency does not strictly coincide with either individual efficacy or with causal effects. This is because 'agents' might not ultimately be held responsible for their actions, but someone/something else or others in the plural. For example, Ruth initially did not take care of her voice. She slept less and partied and smoked more than was subsequently the case, while it might be true that other band members had prompted her to socialize more after gigs than had Ruth intended. While all this can be explained in causal terms as a chain of events or by saying that what Ruth did was, in the end, her own choice, one may conversely argue, as Ruth did, that it was her voice, cigarettes, lack of sleep, the band or even singing itself that should be 'blamed' and which, intentionally or unintentionally, harmed her ability to sing.

Therefore, Laidlaw argues that neither a focus on subjectivity nor on causality, nor, indeed, some combination of the two is sufficient for imputing agency in any given situation (2010b: 150). Because it is the determination of responsibility that is intentional, how and why we assign it may vary. However, the complexity and diversity of responsibility and its motivated attributions are not subjective qualities and this is where, according to Laidlaw, ANT provides, at the very least, a useful corrective to practice theory's conflation of intentionality with subjectivity, and thus helps to recast agency on the basis of *distributed* responsibility. Agency, then, should be seen as distributed and relational, because through 'intermediating agencies'[149] (which largely refer to the ways in which we are related to other people and social groups and not only objects) we may be held responsible (or not) for situations outside (or not) our individual control or intentions (Laidlaw 2010b: 152-153).[150]

Because blame and responsibility are indispensable from any consideration of action, the social-scientific dualism of structure and agency is not a dualism at all; agency rests upon this third, ethical dimension of responsibility rather than causality or individual efficacy (ibid.: 154-155). This third dimension delineates a space 'where people interact with one another, where decisions are – or seem to be – made, actors identified, responsibilities allocated, actions justified, moral claims asserted, and possible futures imagined' (Keane 2003: 242). The actuality that agency is inextricably linked to relational processes of the assignation of responsibility has a final and crucial implication, namely that the proliferation of responsibility and its attribution, that is, 'more agency', does not result, as practice theory would have it, in 'more freedom' (Laidlaw 2010b: 162).

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[149] Lauren Berlant also challenges the agency/structure dualism and the identification of agency with subjectivity and intentionality, by developing the concept of 'lateral agency' (2007).

[150] Caton (2010), following Arendt (2003), also calls attention to responsibility to consider the problem of evil by drawing on a concept of personal responsibility. Laidlaw does not deny that individuals *act*, but that the source and assignation of responsibility for these acts normally dwells in a set of relations. This relationality serves to either undermine or augment one's responsibility. For example, that statistics anticipate specific crime rates does not erase the fact that a criminal has committed the act. It does affect, however, our judgement of where responsibility for the act lies and, indeed, our interpretation of the very identity of the act (Caton 2010: 179; Laidlaw 2010b: 153, 160).

The ethical dimensions of practice appear particularly conducive to ethnographic description and analysis. They account for the 'middle ground' missed by definitions of agency caught up in a system of cause and effect or subjective intentionality. The idea of a culturally defined and historically specific freedom as conscious, ethical practice addresses the concept of agency's problematic connotations. Ethical freedom avoids both the overtones of resistance to structures and the easy identification of intentionality with subjectivity. The ethical modalities of action are not intrinsic to individuals, themselves seen as given entities, but rather are intersubjective processes of self-cultivation and formation. While ANT can help us to expose the contingencies and interrelationships that underpin ethical self-fashioning, it falls short of accounting for the responsibility that ethical action always entails and our judgements in the process of assigning such responsibility. It would be impossible to do these things if we embraced an anti-humanist ethics (see also Vandenberghe 2002; cf. Faubion 2011: 119).

6.7 DiY Politics

The argument I have just discussed demonstrates that we need to embrace the intersubjective and relational nature of ethical practice and, in doing so, we must transcend the structure/agency dichotomy whilst also reconsider established notions of Western personhood and individualism. We should not disregard the idea that music or any other skilled activity 'brings into use' human bodies and materials in an environment. There is a risk, however, that the ethical dimension of skilled practice will be obscured by a singular focus either on causality or bodily techniques (see Ingold 2000: 352). Skills – musical, ethical or otherwise – are learned and exercised through interaction and in conjunction with others. Whether it is making music, gradually transforming ourselves into ethical subjects, or both at the same time, these actions always take more than one person. Skilled practice requires care, judgement and dexterity (ibid.: 353). Are not these also intrinsic characteristics of ethics? Moreover, as ethical properties, are not these of intersubjective nature as I have shown?

‘Do-it-Yourself’, writes Stephen Duncombe, ‘is a far-from-radical proposition. The idea of not allowing your creativity to be stymied by any “authoritarian system” is the essence of American individualism’ (1997: 188). And George McKay joins in: ‘[T]he turn to a politics of Do it Yourself, of self-empowerment, can be seen as a corollary of the Thatcherite notion of the privileging of the individual’ (1998: 19). However, my ethnographic findings demonstrate that DiY does not promote an individualistic approach to music-making, but rather that its ethical potential is firmly rooted in social interaction and co-operation. This is also where DiY’s ‘political’ essence is grounded, namely in the coming together of people.

DiY is not politics by definition, but ‘politics by example’ (Duncombe 1997: 205). More specifically, following Duncombe’s insight, DiY is ‘pre-political’ (Hobsbawm 1959), in the sense that it lacks a clear articulation of its own aspirations to transform the world. However, as opposed to political formations that have the means to effect change in the public realm, DiY gains its authority through its focus on lived experience rather than political theory. It embodies the conjunction of means with ends by resting upon what Arendt, following Aristotle, called ‘actuality‘ [*energeia*], which conveys open-ended [*ateleis*] activities the meaning of which lies in performative action itself (1998 [1958]: 206). DiY is therefore ‘predicated on such authenticity, such commitment, such rooted realness of action’ (McKay 1998: 32).

Nevertheless, saying that DiY is pre-political assumes a form of politics that DiY does not necessarily express. Hence ‘DiY politics’ in the section title, and not ‘the politics of DiY’. It would seem – at least as I have experienced it among my informants – that the kind of ‘political’ realm that DiY engenders and supports is much closer to Arendt’s notion, which derives from the ancient *polis* and according to which politics:

> [R]ises directly out of acting together, the “sharing of words and deeds”. Thus action not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all, but is the one activity which constitutes it (1998 [1958]: 198).

Does it follow that DiY would represent a form of *politikê*, in the Aristotelian sense of 'the care and maintenance of the *polis*' (Faubion 2011: 22)? Arendt describes a politics that, as Hirschkind perceives it, enables ordinary citizens to 'shape the conditions of their collective existence' (2006: 8). The 'actuality' of DiY reflects the privileging of an *êthos* rather than a homeostatic teleology. By contrast, *politikê* is *energeia* and *praxis*, but not *poiêsis* (Faubion 2001a: 93). As I have argued after Faubion (2011), the ethical maintains a primacy over the themitical, while for Arendt the *polis* 'is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together' and *not* an entity in need of mere reproduction (1998 [1958]: 198). Faubion himself notes that Foucault's ethics could never be confined within *politikê* (2001a: 91).

Ethical freedom should not be conflated with *politikê*, but the *êthos* of freedom is profoundly political insofar as it involves one's relationship with others (Foucault 1997: 286-287). Foucault distinguishes freedom from liberation, because the latter is an essential but insufficient condition for the conscious practices that make people free and capable of co-existence with others (ibid.: 282-283). Arendt would agree with this definition of freedom when she states that 'the appearance of freedom...coincides with the performing act. Men are free...as long as they act, neither before nor after; for to *be* free and to act are the same' (1961: 153). Therefore, acts that assert the subject's ethical freedom are inherently 'political' and, as stressed many times already, always involve others: 'Freedom needed, in addition to mere liberation, the company of other men' (ibid.: 148).

Still, if ethical acts of self-making have 'political' resonance, then what do they do exactly? Does DiY resonate at all with politics as we have come to know it? Though direct political contestation did not appear to be part of my informants' music practices, critique of established norms is implied by DiY practice, but its 'politics by example' confronts the system from within: it appropriates the structures it purports to oppose rather than resisting them. From a conventional political standpoint, therefore, it is precisely the in between *position* of DiY that gives it its strength. As Walter Benjamin

has remarked, it is the place of cultural producers and their work *in* the relations of production rather the content of their work and its attitude *to* these relations, which characterize a politically progressive culture (1970 [1934]: 2). Such a form of cultural production becomes an example for others and helps to bring down the boundaries between producers and consumers:

> *An author who teaches a writer nothing, teaches nobody anything*. The determinant factor is the exemplary character of a production that enables it, first, to lead other producers to this production, and secondly to present them with an improved apparatus for their use. And this apparatus is better to the degree that it leads consumers to production, in short that it is capable of making co-workers out of readers or spectators (ibid.: 6)

It seems to me that this could not be truer for DiY, in the sense that it allows subjects to become producers. For Finnegan, the claim of being either 'amateur' or 'professional' can have political resonance (1989: 16). However, DiY is a political example by virtue of what it does rather than what it is or claims to be. On the other hand, freedom *from* something does not automatically culminate in freedom *to* something else (Duncombe 1997: 193). Yet this bypasses the point that freedom itself, as the very stuff of ethics, lies in our capacity to *become ethical subjects*. As such, DiY constitutes first and foremost an ethical example.

However, DiY can never become a blueprint because it always emerges in the process of *use.* This is also how material forms emerge (Ingold 2000) and how cities become *oeuvres* (Lefebvre 1996). By dissolving content or 'substance' into form DiY 'grows' from within, rather than its form being applied from outside (see Ingold 2000: 339). DiY thus represents a form of autopoiesis and in the process of 'growing' it simultaneously transforms the relations of its own becoming. This relational quality of DiY is what makes it important but elusive; it is also what calls for a reconsideration of 'yourself' in DiY. As both Duncombe (1997: 189) and McKay (1998: 27) have noted, 'yourself' perhaps insists on ascribing a sense of atomistic or possessive individualism where it does not exist. If DiY is a form of weaving, then surely 'Do-it-Ourselves'

accurately captures the interweaving of musical pathways and ethical trajectories, in short, the lives of my informants in Glasgow at the time of my fieldwork.

Conclusion

What has this thesis come to? An ethnographic answer would be that DiY is better conceived as a *verb*, as something that people do, and as an Aristotelian 'actuality' that inheres in the process of new beginnings and one's capacity to act, what Arendt has called 'natality' (1998 [1958]: 8-9).

But, as Stuart knew, the freedom to begin involved judging what was left behind and the compromises entailed in reconciling the old with the new (Lambek 2010b: 55). Conversely, and as the collective was aware, long-term commitment was equally ethical, but in a sense, *all* DiY activity was a beginning embedded within a constant stream of action and ongoing judgement. It was a process of ethical *enskilment* (Ingold 2000: 416) that was inseparable from everyday practice. It was, moreover, a practice predicated upon freedom and collective action, and a distributed sense of responsibility. It was *small*, but with tremendous power for ethical transformation. Its poietic and transformative capacities engendered an ethical register comprising bodies, selves, urban spaces and rhythms within a mutual becoming. Ethical *bricoleurs* constitute themselves, their bodies and the spaces they inhabit as a continuous *self-bricolage* (Rabinow 1997: xxxix).

This thesis started from the premise that music is a social practice and process. This allowed me to attend to the multifarious *uses* of music as the means for men and women to produce meaning, change themselves, their bodies and the cities in which they live. Music does not only dwell in musical notation but belongs to the realm of everyday life. In examining ethnographically the everyday practices of a small group of three Glasgow-based music actors, I have sought to demonstrate that music, ethics and the city are inextricably related in quotidian but powerful ways. Listening, playing or dancing to music are ubiquitous practices that most people would not hesitate to term as 'good', but the 'virtue' of music and its ethical potential tends to escape our everyday and academic horizons.

Certainly not all practices are free from ultimate goals or competition, and yet 'above all', according to Lambek, 'they provide orientation, motivation, and make life absorbing, worthwhile and even exciting' (2010a: 22-23). Even though we could reduce the heterogeneity of DiY and trace its position within Bourdieu's schema as a field of 'restricted production' (1993), an exclusive focus on macro-processes would confine and, in fact, impoverish our understanding of the experiential and ethical pluralism that music practice affords. It would miss, for example, the singularity of the *Divorce* break by treating it as part of the interests and investments integral to the field, that is, as an *illusio* and a reassertion of the 'game'.

This is not to deny that DiY is part of a 'game' and a form of production that, in its many facets, variably invites or supports a consumerist lifestyle. However, for a practice that constantly undergoes reassessment and has been transformed from complete negation into a pragmatic response, neatly placing DiY within an overdetermined schema would seem to oversimplify. It would be a reduction of ethical complexity (Faubion 2011). Because such practices can only be fully grasped in terms of their ethical import, it is through the examination of ethical practices that we might be able to understand their political significance (Mahmood 2005: 35). DiY is neither about rebellion or resistance, nor about subordination, complacency and passivity. As Hirschkind explains, to define practices of ethical cultivation as forms of indoctrination or enculturation would preclude us from attending to the fierce debates, disagreements and arguments involved, as well as from highlighting the fact that subjects do not begin with a pre-formulated notion of the 'good' but this emerges in the process. Subjects acquire their understanding of virtue as they go along (2006: 140).

DiY cannot be perceived as 'leisure' and though it may emerge as the outcome of practical necessity and defined by what it is *not*, it ultimately has a positive definition. Practical necessity for Bernard Williams is not to be conflated with 'moral obligation', which in many instances cannot explain ethically why one has chosen a path and not another (1985: 209). This choice may or may not have an ethical source, but it certainly

does not exist 'outside' the individual as a Kantian imperative. Therefore, 'necessity' emerges as not-so-necessary but partially as a form of self-deliberation.

DiY seen through Benjamin's perspective (1970 [1934]) permits us to trace not what it can do in politics but what it stands for *as* politics. Stuart once told me that DiY was the means to 'take something back', that is, to reclaim and restore the right to musical expression and dissemination. DiY avoids becoming stagnant but it feeds off the structures that it is usually seen to 'resist'. It *inhabits* them and appropriates strategies that it turns into tactics (de Certeau 1984). It is a process that is projected onto urban space and the effort of city dwellers to inhabit the locality (Lefebvre 1996, 2003). The transformation effected upon the city by DiY music practice rests upon the metamorphosis of urban life and of the urban experience of individuals and groups who engage in this practice. It is not a *material* transformation of the urban landscape – scarcely any materials were removed, destroyed or added by my informants' activity.

Rather, it is a transformation reflected in the musical *trace* of inhabitants, a trace that is neither reductive nor additive in a material sense (Ingold 2007: 43). Exactly as selves and bodies are not passive, pre-given entities waiting to be discovered, space is produced through practice (Lefebvre 1991). It becomes one of the constituent dimensions of practice. The musical pathways of my informants were as much part of the urban fabric as they were the means for its transformation. As Ingold succinctly observes:

> The inhabitant is rather one who participates from within in the very process of the world's continual coming into being and who, in laying a trail of life, contributes to its weave and texture (2007: 81).

DiY practice, and musical performance as such, do not leave a material trace. In its immanence and in the sense of *communitas* (Turner 1969) it engenders, DiY practice leaves a tacit but indelible mark on the minds and bodies of performers and audiences and their ways of being and acting in the world. Its legacy is an ethical one and the

culmination of this ethical self depends upon mundane, rather than extraordinary processes. The use and contribution of urban space to this ethical becoming is both a means and an end and affects as much as it is affected by this ongoing movement.

Rather than conflating the right to the city with what is usually glossed as 'human rights', and what is 'legal' with what is 'good', Lefebvre's formulation demands the disassociation of one's right to urban life from rationalistic and legalistic discourses and places it squarely within people's *capacity* and *potential* to realize an urban ethical life on their own terms, through spatio-temporal appropriations and thus by forging their own rhythms (2004). It points to the ways in which urban processes, such as making music in the city, forge particular identities.

These identities are conferred not by experiencing music, but by experiencing becoming ourselves *through* music: '[O]ur experience of music', writes Frith, 'is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*' (1996c: 109). In building particular identities through music my informants exercised their right to recognition, to dignity and to equal rights (Taylor 1992). However, such recognition is already caught up in the politics of identity of an authoritative state discourse of legal rights.[151] It would be more accurate to suggest that DiY practice as an example and potential was predicated upon the cultivation of capacities and sensibilities so as to realize a different ethical, rather than political ideal (Mahmood 2005: 193).

Simon Frith notes elsewhere that music can set in motion a distinctive identity that can be consonant or dissonant with the ways in which we are identified through other social processes (1987: 149). Does this set music apart from other human social activities? Throughout this thesis I have attempted to show how music presents people with *one*

[151] An alternative could be traced in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas and the ethical recognition of the 'other' (1998, 2003). However, although Levinas provides a complement to the Foucauldian ethical apparatus of self-making (Lambek 2010a: 25), his transcendental other somewhat misses the fact that, more often than not, ethical regard remains resolutely local (Faubion 2011: 90).

way of realizing an ethical self. But perhaps, as Finnegan argues, 'music *is* also in some sense "special"?' (1989: 331).

As Blacking remarked some time ago: 'The effectiveness of music as *music*, however, can only be described accurately in terms of musical parameters, and associated physiological responses of the body' (1979: 10). But if music *in itself* is not easily conducive to anthropological analysis, is there a way to examine its ethical properties? Is it only urban rhythms and repetitive motions in the practice of music that engender ethical selves, or *musical* rhythms too?

The first thing that emerges from such a question is that, if some music is ethical, then definitely there is music that can be *unethical*. The link between music and violence and the unethical uses of sound have been studied (e.g. Goodman 2010; Johnson & Cloonan 2009), but there is no causal link between sound as such and unethical behaviour. Instead, music's ethical (or unethical) essence should be grounded in its capacity to *affect*:

> Like modern poetry, music primarily works on the level of what Kristeva calls "the semiotic", a non-verbal, pre-signifying and heterogeneous energy. Constructions of self and other through music thus rely on signification through the drives of affects, sensations and gestures. It is here that we will try to situate the (un)ethical aspects of music, of music as sound. (Musical) sounds act on and penetrate the autonomy of the body, the individual *ethos*; they induce affects in the subject's body – a body which appears to be vulnerable as it can hardly, if at all, protect itself against external sonic influences. *This impact is ethical in nature, exactly because it is a penetration, positively or negatively, of the subject's body* (Cobussen & Nielsen 2012: 100, emphasis added).

Therefore, the ethical 'substance' of music is to be found not in the biologistic language of pulse rates or changes in blood pressure, but at the interface between sound vibrations and their somatic impact. Music and sound can create the affective conditions within which ethical selves come to be formed. Sounds do not engender ethical selves as such, but rather a constellation of affective potentialities from which subjects are formed.

For Kristeva, whose focus is on poetic language, music as a non-verbal signifying system is the outcome of semiosis, although it is the relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic that constitutes subjects and which is intrinsic in any signifying process (1984: 24). However, it is the semiotic that always violates and ruptures the symbolic: '[W]hat remodels the symbolic order is always the influx of the semiotic', which 'gives "music" to literature' (ibid.: 62-63). Thus, it is the 'musicality' of poetic language that holds the promise of subverting and reformulating literary practice, by escaping meaning and signification.

It is not difficult to envisage how Kristeva's process of semiosis applies to music when, for example, certain dissonant melodies, arrhythmic parts or even pure noise disfigure and subvert conventional musical 'meaning'. These may not signify or articulate an intelligible or communicative musical or discursive meaning, but might induce profound bodily responses. As DeChaine explains: 'These sounds don't *mean* anything to me, which is not to say they don't *affect* me' (2002: 84, emphasis added).

According to Lucy from *Divorce*, DiY was not trying to spread a 'message'. Rather, its essence was predicated upon ethics, which in turn harked back to an experience not of 'pleasure', but of *jouissance* or 'bliss'. For Barthes who was influenced by Kristeva's ideas, a 'text of bliss' is:

> [T]he text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettle's the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation to language (1975: 14).

In borrowing Kristeva's terms of *genotext* and *phenotext* (1984: 86-89), Barthes makes elsewhere a further distinction between *pheno-song* and *geno-song*. The former:

> [C]overs all the phenomena, all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of the interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression, everything which it is customary to talk about, which forms the tissue of cultural

> values (the matter of acknowledged tastes, of fashions, of critical commentaries), which takes its bearing directly on the ideological alibis of a period ("subjectivity", "expressivity", "dramaticism", "personality" of the artist) (Barthes 1977: 182).

By contrast, *geno-song* is:

> [T]he volume of the singing and speaking voice, the space where significations germinate "from within language and in its very materiality"; it forms a signifying play having nothing to do with communication, representation (of feelings), expression; it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language – not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sounds-signifiers, of its letters – where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work. It is, in a very simple word but which must be taken seriously, the *diction* of the language (ibid.: 182-183).

From a perspective of *jouissance*, it 'is the body in the voice as it sings' (ibid.: 188), 'the language lined with flesh...a whole carnal stereophony' (ibid. 1975: 66). It is this 'carnality' of music and the *mind-in-the-body* of *all* music practice (see Frith 1996b: 128) that exemplify music's ethical function, as well as how and why certain subjects might be *musically* compelled to undergo a process of ethical cultivation.

For sure, over time sound elements and musical gestures cease to be semiotic and cross the boundary to the symbolic, where they remain as parts of conventional musical meaning. This is what, according to Laing, happened with punk (1985: 130). Nevertheless, as semiosis and *jouissance*, music and the affects it elicits serve as an *amplifier* of ethical subjectivation and as the means to grasp 'how thoughts feel and how feelings think' (DeChaine 2002: 86). As an affect-inducing entity, musical sound 'seems to be an involuntary trigger *par excellence*', because it '*feels* more deeply, or at least more immediately, than language' (ibid.: 90-91). Of course, this assumes a prior distinction between speech as 'language' – a set of rational rules modeled on writing – and 'musical' speech, which is not always the case (see Ingold 2000: 407-413, 2007: 6-38).

To recall Blacking's words (1979: 8), music offers a 'special' mode of bodily organization and control. Whether it is associated with 'docility' or with the

organization of bodies in space, music provides the means for control and is thus linked to power. However, as I have shown, for Foucault power relationships emerge because of the existence of freedom (1997: 292). After all, 'docility' need not necessarily imply 'subjection' (Mahmood 2005).

Therefore, music can be 'unethical' only and insofar as it is *used* as means of subordination – for example, as a sonic weapon (Goodman 2010). In a Foucauldian sense, we could say that music is unethical when it is used to *enslave*. It follows that music's (un)ethical resonance *as music* does not rest upon its capacity to induce violent or anti-social behaviour (usually the argument that lurks behind the moral panic that occasionally emerges in association with specific music genres), but in the way in which sound qualities are optimally suited to affect, that is, to *harm* the body – to deprive it from its ethical potential. In its ability to facilitate, amplify, mute or inhibit subjects from realizing an ethical self, music, like sound, is explicitly linked to ethics.

Music's affective and thus (un)ethical potential is intrinsically linked to the way sonic events assume and, more specifically, enforce a relationship between sound, the subject, and his or her body:

> To these unsignified and unsignifiable sonic events – events that cannot always be turned into objects of cognition – the subject cannot *not* respond; she cannot *not* participate...Beyond or before the activation of semantic or cognitive listening, the sonic is a force of contact that has the seductive power to affect the body, the skin, the brain...Sonic events are felt and processed as modes of feeling beyond or before they are cognized and categorized in schemas of knowledge. Rhythms, frequencies and intensities affect bodies before they are transduced by regimes of signification and before they are picked up by human emotions and cognition...The sense of music always exceeds whatever is or can be expressed by its means, and it is here that we can trace a specific musical or sonic ethics. How music or sound (directly) affects the body has (also) ethical implications (Cobussen & Nielsen 2012: 105).

For Cobussen and Nielsen, the bodily effects of music are not 'subjective' as they are not discursive. As Massumi notes, the body does not only absorb pulses but 'it infolds *contexts*' (2002: 30). Sonic effects are grounded in a more distributed notion that embeds the subject within a complex of relations:

> *Sonic effects* are operative in the space between the physical sound environment, the sound milieu of a socio-cultural community and the "internal soundscape" of every individual. It is these potential effects that give music its moral or ethical dimension and, with that, a certain *responsibility*. This implies *a shift from a concern with what music means to a concern with what it does and how it works* (Cobussen & Nielsen 2012: 110, emphasis added).

If music gives rise to the body as an affective nexus and permits us to define it through its capacity to *affect* and be *affected*, then it further highlights the need for a different ontology between sound and subject. Music 'turns out to be intrinsically and unmistakably relational', while this relationality does not follow but *precedes* corporeal autonomy and subjective individuality (ibid.: 113-114). Music, then, through the notion of affect, calls for a reconsideration of subjective intentionality and responsibility, which as I have shown in the previous chapter, should be conceived as distributed and relational.

In voicing concerns in relation to the subjective nature of ethics, and in challenging the idea of the autonomous body, musical affects present us with a distinctively useful analytical tool for exploring the ethical *in terms of the musical*, and thus for questioning some of our basic assumptions with regards to the self, identity and the body. Affects, musical or otherwise, being a constitutive dimension of the world that surrounds us, are not beyond our ethnographic purview. They belong to the ordinary, to our sense of place, to the conjunction between human exteriority and interiority (which is central to the cultivation of an *êthos*) and to the 'feel' of inanimate objects, as recent anthropological accounts have demonstrated (e.g. Gray 2011; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Stewart 2007; see also Pelkmans 2013). Musical affects are the very stuff of everyday life and its ordinary rhythms. As Lefebvre puts it:

> Musical rhythm does not only sublimate the aesthetic and a rule of art: it has an ethical function. In its relation to the body, to time, to the work, it illustrates real (everyday) life. It purifies it in the acceptance of catharsis. Finally, and above all, it brings compensation for the miseries of everydayness, for its deficiencies and failures. Music integrates the functions, the values of Rhythm (Lefebvre 2004: 66).

Charles Hirschkind describes how the cultivation of shared embodied dispositions and sensibilities among his informants required attention not to the propositional meaning of sermons but to the qualities and subtle nuances of vocal delivery. As such, listening 'well' meant 'listening with the heart', which involved 'the body in its entirety, as a complex synthesis of patterned moral reflexes' (2006: 79; cf. Nancy 2007). The self's ethical becoming *vis-à-vis* sound and music does not rely upon a specific *doxa* unaffected by the aural atmosphere that envelops the subject. Whether we listen with our hearts or our bodies, music can never only 'reflect'. What it does reflect is an ongoing process of ethical evolvement based upon emerging practices to suit the circumstances at hand. According to Hirschkind, 'practitioners of a tradition, through innovation and adaptation, attempt to cultivate and sustain the sensory condition and modes of attention and inattention that make that tradition viable within modern contexts' (2006: 104). In other words, 'tradition' is sustained through the continuous cultivation, adjustment and alignment of practices in accord with present needs and concerns.

Considering how I have analyzed DiY practice in this thesis, it would make no sense to refer to it as a form of 'tradition'. After all, traditions are either readily verifiable by harking back to an original ideal or a modern fiction and invention (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). To take only one example, reflecting on a successful annual Scottish music festival, Stuart expressed the view that this 'identical' repetition was an example of 'bad tradition', the opposite of what he had envisaged for *Cry Parrot* as a dynamic entity that is constantly renewed (Chapter 5). Whereas *Cry Parrot*, and DiY in general, could hardly be described along similar traditionalist lines, there is a sense in which we could perceive it as part of a 'tradition'.

Instead of suggesting that the ethical examples on the basis of which DiY practice took shape were archetypes to be fully emulated by subsequent practitioners, we could define tradition as a set of practices and discourses that link the past with the present and highlight the pedagogies of practical, discursive and embodied forms of knowledge that

inform and sustain this traditional modality into the present (Asad 1986; Mahmood 2005: 113-117). Thus defined, tradition emerges as a form of *engagement* with its practical and discursive constituents rather than an unchanging structure or a set of precepts to be followed. Instead of being 'a regressive attachment to the past', in this sense tradition is 'an attitude that valorizes the past as relevant to the task of living in the present' (Hirschkind 2006: 212).

The orientation of DiY towards the here-and-now but also to the future-in-the-present does not excise the relevance of the past. The meaning of tradition as a repertoire of plural and malleable practices and discourses becomes particularly relevant to an anthropology of ethics that is based upon ethical freedom. Foucault is clear when he argues that practices of the self are not invented by the subject but represent 'models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group' (1997: 291). Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood and others have relied on MacIntyre's (1981, 1988, 1990) conceptualization of tradition in order to devise an argument for the salience of the concept in anthropological analysis. According to MacIntyre, 'a living tradition...is a historically extended, socially embodied argument...Traditions, when vital, embody continuities of conflict' (1981: 222).

As Pandian and others have pointed out (2008b; Pandian & Ali 2010), MacIntyre's useful concept and his focus on traditional 'coherence' can be adapted in order to accommodate 'fragmentation', but also to account for the multiple interpenetrations of different traditions. Therefore, rather than 'reconstructing' tradition from a series of disparate practices, Pandian perceives fragments 'as marking the impossibility of a whole and seamless horizon of experience rather than sustaining the possibility of its reconstruction' (2008b: 470). Moreover, Laidlaw demonstrates how MacIntyre's concept of tradition allows us to observe how 'in one tradition, beliefs, values, and practices from another might be seriously entertained as potentially preferable to its own' (2010c: 66), without necessarily losing its distinctiveness.

This exemplifies in DiY the meaning of inhabiting and appropriating norms and established practices without evacuating its distinctive ethical potential. It further explains why Stuart's practice could still be called DiY. It also shows that DiY as a set of ever evolving practices and as an ongoing debate conjures up not a hegemonic tradition but 'a more mobile, time-sensitive, more open-ended concept than most formulations of culture' (Asad 2006: 289). Thus, what has been glossed as 'DiY culture' would be better off attending to the inherited and dispersed ethical possibilities of 'tradition'.

The temporality of tradition and the linkages between past, present and future it fosters, illuminate the *trans-temporal* nature of DiY practice and infuse value to a past not 'as a repository of finished business', but as 'continually active in the present, pressing against the future' (Hallam & Ingold 2007: 11). From an affective standpoint, where the distance between bodily sensation and cognitive perception encapsulates the coexistence of past traces with incipient potentials or tendencies, the future 'is contemporary with the past's contemporaneousness with the present' (Massumi 2002: 15). Less complexly and more to the point: 'Thinking with tradition moves anthropology toward a sense of the contemporary moment as rooted in the inherited forms of the past but also bearing the seeds of many possible futures' (Pandian 2008b: 477).

This idea of tradition provides the means to problematize the notion of 'authenticity', which is both highly prevalent in popular music discourse and a notoriously obscure analytical concept. As I have mentioned in various instances throughout this thesis, my informants considered their music and their overall practice in some sense 'authentic'. But what did this mean? For example, *Divorce*'s lack of identification with a specific music genre meant that the perceived authenticity of their music relied upon its 'uniqueness' or 'originality', that is, upon a *lack* of authenticity in relation to an identifiable tradition.

The band resisted pigeonholing when journalistic accounts compared them either to prominent no wave bands or contemporary noise bands with a similar emphasis on rhythm. On a more general level, the band were equally reluctant to associate their music with a local 'sound' or 'scene', although they claimed that there existed local bands who believed that they *had* to sound a certain way because they lived in Glasgow. Contrary to what Cohen (1991) argues about Liverpool bands and their preference of an undistorted, clean and 'authentic' sound, *Divorce*'s sound was heavily processed and their pedals were all kinds of distortion pedals. But as Attali puts it: 'What is noise to the old order is harmony to the new' (1985: 35). These forms of authenticity reflect different historical periods and approaches to music-making and thus necessitated different degrees of engagement with technology. However, the use of technology and authenticity are not mutually exclusive (Frith 1986: 269).

The embodied ethical dispositions germane to and cultivated through music-making raise the question of *who*, rather than *what*, is being authenticated (see Moore 2002: 210). Although Moore examines musical authenticity, here I am interested with processes of *ethical* authentication. After all, authenticity or 'truth' may be represented by cultural forms such as music, but they are not manifested *in* them (Derrida 1987: 5). As Middleton notes, it is the notion of musical appropriation that has survived 'from the debris of ''authenticity''' (1990: 139), which is consonant with Frith's contention that authenticity is utterly misleading and that 'what we should be examining is not how true a piece of music is to something else, but how it sets up the idea of "truth" in the first place' (1987: 137).

Marilyn Strathern notes that 'there are two common perceptions of this world at large: an increasing homogenization of social and cultural forms seems to be accompanied by a proliferation of claims to specific authenticities' (1995: 3). The proliferation of authenticity (Fillitz & Saris 2012) and a preoccupation with defining its meaning highlights the very fact of its *loss* (Lindholm 2006). Trilling (1971) traces the historical emergence of this preoccupation through an examination of the virtue of sincerity which

was a necessary component of social life before its dethronement by authenticity. This shift represented a parallel shift from paying attention to how one *appears* to be to who one really *is* (Lindholm 2006: 4). The modern view of authenticity highlighted the ideals of family, democracy and egalitarianism and also rejected socially imposed roles in favour or self-deliberation and individualism (Berman 2009 [1970]).

Because authenticity 'is ascribed, not inscribed' (Moore 2002: 210), processes of authentication are far more conducive to ethnographic observation and interpretation than abstract notions of authenticity that hark back to a historical and exemplary tradition (Vannini & Williams 2009: 11-12). A backwards authentication usually results in the proliferation of simulacra (Baudrillard 1994), rather than authentic objects or selves: the more one attempts to authenticate something in reference to an ideal archetype, the more likely it is that this will be a fake or pale imitation (Lindholm 2006: 20).

This does not mean that *acts* of authentication should be deemed inauthentic. Rather, it forcefully demonstrates that the anthropological search for authenticity should not consist of the 'make-believe' but 'the act of believing itself', that is, 'the techniques and the resources that people have at their disposal to *believe*, in the sense of taking things to be true' (van de Port 2004: 8, 10) and in their 'ability to establish, sense, and live through concrete links to the world' (Baxstrom 2008: 11). As such, authenticity is a process that belongs to the realm of practice.

As Lindholm puts it, 'the quest for a *felt authentic grounding* becomes increasingly pressing as certainty is eroded and the boundaries of the real lose their taken-for-granted validity' (2002: 337, emphasis added). van de Port warns us to take processes of authentication seriously and to 'include an account of the continuous human effort that goes into manufacturing and maintaining a sense of "authentic grounding"' (2004: 10). In *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991), Charles Taylor addresses three modern malaises: the losses of meaning, ends and freedom. Central to his consideration is the tenet that

the ‘ideal of authenticity’ is a recent phenomenon, linked to a sense of atomistic individualism and instrumental reason. As he goes on to demonstrate, the realization of authenticity always transcends the self, and freedom always challenges ‘the culture of narcissism’ or radical-self determination. He explains that ‘[t]he struggle ought not to be *over* authenticity, but *about* it, defining its proper meaning’, which ‘at its best’ – when it expands ethical horizons beyond the self – ‘allows a richer mode of existence’ (Taylor 1991: 73-74).

I believe that DiY practice goes beyond its reference to an authentic grounding and it provides people with a *regime of living* (Lakoff & Collier 2004). A regime of living places emphasis on the quotidian aspects of everyday life and its multiple configurations across different domains and sites. In doing so, it does not set ethical discourse and action apart from the mundane dimensions of ordinary life; it does not distinguish between the *polis* and the *oikos*. Its particular usefulness lies in its capacity to consider different empirical configurations and connect analytical trajectories:

> A given regime provides one possible means, and always only one among various possible means, for organizing, reasoning about, and living ethically – that is, with respect to a specific understanding of the good. Regimes of living have a certain systematicity or regularity – like a diet, a medical regimen, or a set of exercises – that give them a provisional consistency or coherence. But they do not necessarily have the stability or concrete institutionalization of a political regime. Rather, they may be conceived as abstract congeries of ethical reasoning and practice that emerge in a range of situations, taking diverse actual forms (Lakoff & Collier 2004: 427).

I see ‘Do-it-Yourself’ as one such regime of living that is not confined to music, and as just one ethical answer to the Socratic question: ‘How ought one to live?’ (Williams 1985). DiY points to an *ought* that derives from an *is*, and not only vice versa. With DiY providing an ethical answer as good as any, it seems to me that instead of attempting to discern the possibilities of deriving an *ought* from an *is*, we should recognize that this is what people around the world do everyday (Widlok 2004: 66). I have no better words to answer this question, therefore I resort to the compelling words that, to me, best capture an anthropological answer:

> Wherever and in so far as people's conduct is shaped by attempts to make of themselves a certain kind of person, because it is as such a person that, on reflection, they think they ought to live, to that extent their conduct is ethical and free. And to the extent that they do so with reference to ideals, values, models, practices, relationships, and institutions that are amenable to ethnographic study, to that extent their conduct becomes the subject matter for an anthropology of ethics (Laidlaw 2002: 327).

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